

ONE MEDWAY COUNCIL PLAN

2024/28

Proud to be Medway



FOREWORD

CLLR VINCE MAPLE, LEADER AND RICHARD HICKS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This new One Medway Council Plan sets out our vision, ambitions and priorities for this period as well as the values and behaviours that shape what we do.

We are determined to ensure, that over these four years, we put the council on a firmer and more sustainable financial footing and continue to deliver quality services that the people of Medway value and need.

This document is called our *One Medway Council Plan* as it belongs and relates to every single person in Medway. It is your plan as well as the council's plan, and local people were asked for their views on our priorities in early 2024. We want to work in partnership and collaboration with local people and businesses, to unleash the power and potential of our communities to create a Medway where all people benefit from growth and positive change. We will create a Medway we are all truly proud of.

Proud to be Medway.




Richard.

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This information can be made available in other formats phone, **01634 333333**

If you want to speak to somebody in your own language the Community Interpreting Service can help, phone **01634 335577**

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**OUR
VISION**

**MEDWAY – A PLACE
THAT PEOPLE ARE
PROUD OF.**

**MEDWAY IS RECOGNISED
AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE,
WORK, LEARN AND VISIT,
WHERE ALL PEOPLE THRIVE.**

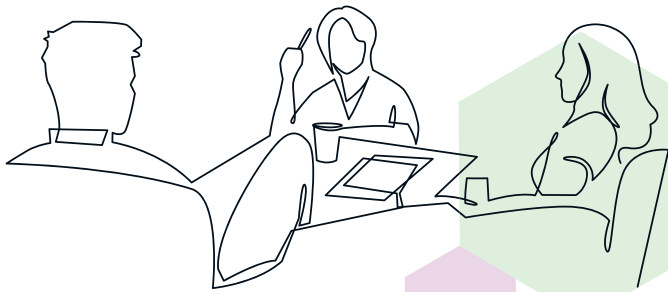
Medway will be a place where our residents enjoy great opportunities for employment and quality of life and lead healthy independent lives, readily accessing support when they need it most.



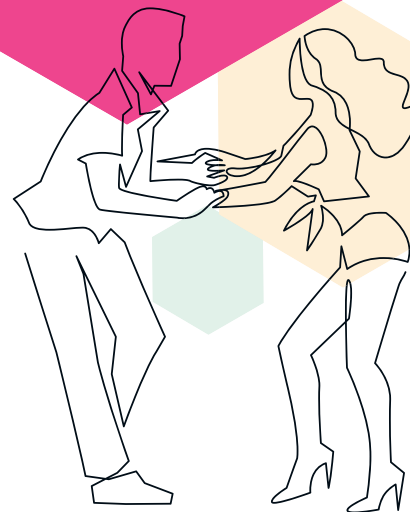
Medway will be a place that puts people at the heart of all we do, where our children and young people have the best start in life and where people of all ages can thrive.



OUR AMBITION



We will work inclusively, in close collaboration with our partners and communities across Medway to drive social and economic improvement together, listening and engaging with local people on our journey to creating One Medway for all.



We will draw on our rich heritage to create a sustainable future for our residents and Medway will be recognised as a beacon for culture, creativity and innovation, a place of welcome, defined by its diversity and vibrancy.

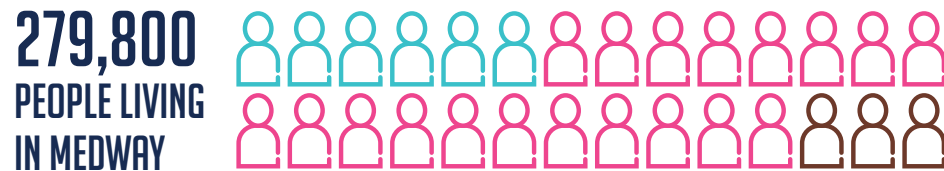
OUR PLACE AND OUR COMMUNITY

It is important to understand our population to help us prioritise and plan effectively for our future.

Medway is now the largest conurbation in the south-east outside London. Medway brings together the individual towns of Rochester, Chatham, Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, together with a number of smaller towns and villages with stunning rural landscapes and river frontage.

We are very proud of many of the achievements and developments seen in Medway in recent years and we have a strong story to tell. However there are a number of structural challenges we still face though particularly areas of deprivation and the related health and income inequalities. We will prioritise tackling these in the coming years.

OUR POPULATION

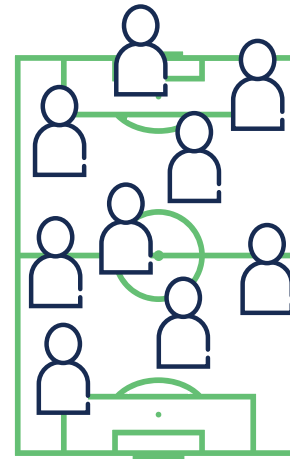
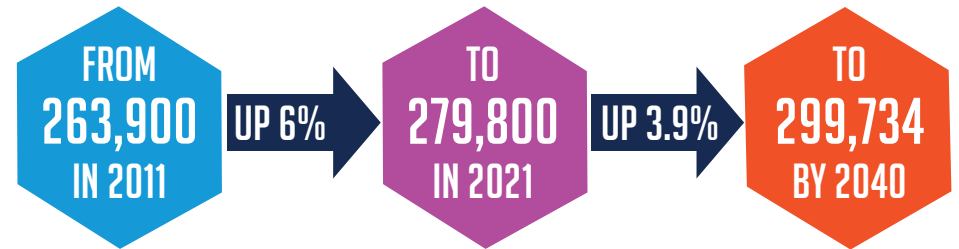


57,016 ARE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 0 TO 15

176,703 ARE WORKING AGE ADULTS (16-64)

46,054 ARE OLDER PEOPLE (65+) AND EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 2040

Our population is expected to grow:



Medway is in the **TOP 40%** most densely populated local authority areas.

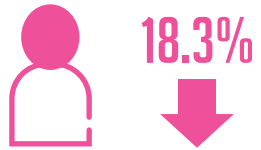
Medway is home to **9.3 PEOPLE** per football pitch sized piece of land compared with 8.8 people in 2011.

Half of Medway's landmass is **RURAL**. In addition to the Hoo Peninsula and internationally recognised wetlands, there are nearly **2,000 hectares of open spaces** and **148** urban parks.

THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGE OF RESIDENTS WHOSE MAIN LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH IS **ROMANIAN** FOLLOWED BY **POLISH & PUNJABI**



Medway is becoming more diverse, 15.7% of residents identified as being from **ethnic minority** backgrounds.



This is lower than England and Wales where 18.3% of residents identified as being from **ethnic minority** backgrounds.



5.6% of residents identified as being **Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African**, the largest increase of any ethnic group.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

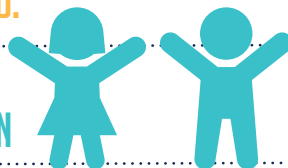


107 SCHOOLS
3 UNIVERSITIES
1 FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE
1 UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
OLDEST CHOIR SCHOOL IN THE WORLD



More than **90%** of Medway's schools are **RATED GOOD OR BETTER BY OFSTED.**

77 CHILDREN IN CARE PER 10,000 CHILDREN



EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESSES

MEDWAY'S
ECONOMY
IS WORTH



UNEMPLOYMENT FELL
FROM 9.6% IN 2013 TO 4% IN 2023

16.8% RESIDENTS are economically inactive

WELL CONNECTED
34 MINUTES TO LONDON
BY HIGH SPEED TRAIN



ZERO CARBON

MEDWAY HAS COMMITTED TO BEING
NET ZERO BY 2050



HOUSING

Percentage of households
in social rented sector
13.6% IN 2021



↑ Private renting increased
from **17.1% TO 20.2%**

↓ Home ownership
decreased from
67.7% TO 64.7%.

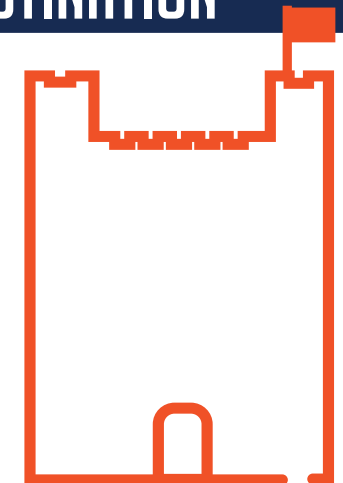
ATTRACTIVE TOURISM DESTINATION

5 MILLION VISITORS EACH YEAR

7,000 JOBS IN MEDWAY BRINGING
£360M TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

HISTORIC **HERITAGE** ATTRACTIONS

FREE **FESTIVAL** PROGRAMME, **8** GREEN FLAG
PARKS, **3** NATURE RESERVES, NORTH DOWNS
WAY & **KING CHARLES III COASTAL PATH**



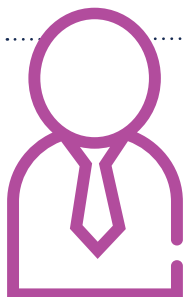
HEALTH IN MEDWAY



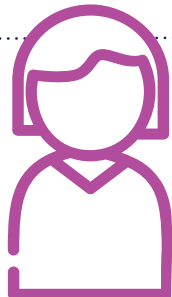
80.6% DESCRIBED THEIR HEALTH AS **GOOD OR VERY GOOD** → UP FROM 79.1% IN 2011

5.6% REPORT THEIR HEALTH AS **BAD OR VERY BAD** → DOWN FROM 5.9% IN 2011

17.4% OF RESIDENTS HAVE A **DISABILITY OR LONG-TERM ILLNESS** → UP FROM 16.4% IN 2011



78.7 YEARS



82.5 YEARS

LIFE EXPECTANCY

In 2022, the life expectancy at birth for males (78.7 years) and females (82.5 years) in Medway was lower than the national average (79.3 years and 83.2 years, respectively).

LIFE SATISFACTION

In 2022/23, **75% OF PEOPLE REPORTED HIGH OR VERY HIGH LEVELS OF LIFE SATISFACTION** which is similar compared to the England average (78%).



SMOKING RATES HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED
IN 2022, **8.9% OF ADULTS WERE SMOKERS**
← DOWN FROM **24.2% IN 2011**
THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IS **12.7%**



In 2022/23, **41.9% OF INFANTS WERE TOTALLY OR PARTIALLY BREASTFED** at age 6-8 weeks, which is lower compared to the England average (49.2%).

In 2022/23, **60.8% OF CHILDREN** in Year 6 **MAINTAINED A HEALTHY WEIGHT.**

The national average is 61.9%

In 2021/22, **67.2% OF ADULTS** were classified as **OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE.**

The England average is 63.8%.








OUR CHALLENGES

Like all local authorities, the reduction in our central government grant over many years, increasing demand for services, in particular adults and children's social care, and increased costs, have combined to put unsustainable pressure on all councils' budgets.



We are committed to tackling this and putting the council's budgets on a more sustainable financial footing over the medium term.

We are in the middle of one of the biggest cost of living crises for decades. The increase in the cost of food, fuel and energy prices is affecting all residents and business across the country. The council is working hard to ensure support gets to those who need it most during these challenging times and our *Cost of Living Plan* sets out how we are helping those most in need, together with information on all the advice and support available to help Medway residents.

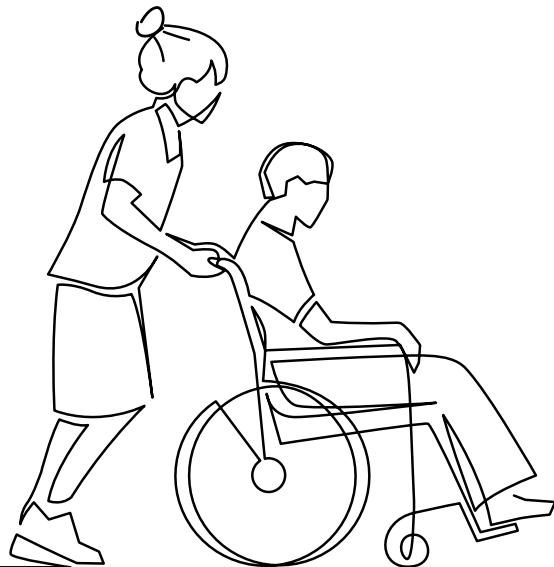
[medway.gov.uk/householdhelp](https://www.medway.gov.uk/householdhelp)



OUR PRIORITIES: PRIORITY 1

DELIVERING QUALITY SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ensuring that the most vulnerable in our community are cared for and supported is one of the most important roles of the council.



Demographic changes, areas of high deprivation and, most recently, the cost-of-living crisis mean that more people in Medway are in need of support from care and social support services. In these challenging times we will ensure we work together with our partners to ensure we have a system that supports, protects and safeguards our children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Our ambition is for Medway to become one of the healthiest places in England. To achieve this aim, we must tackle some very challenging issues that have led to significant inequalities. As well as providing the infrastructure for people to grow and thrive in Medway, action will be taken to improve the physical and emotional

wellbeing of the Medway population. We will safeguard and protect our vulnerable residents working with our key partners in the health, voluntary sector, faith and wider community. We will help people gain the appropriate knowledge and skills to improve their confidence to better manage their health and wellbeing. Individuals, families and carers will know what they need to do, to prevent, reduce or delay deterioration in health status. One of the council's exciting major projects underway is researching public health in Medway looking into the wider determinants of health and health inequalities to inform future decision making. All our strategies and policies will have prevention as a key theme. By doing this, we will deliver our vision of improving health for all Medway residents.



Medway Council works hard to provide a huge range of services within our communities – from libraries and community hubs to children’s centres, sports centres, theatres, events and festivals. These are all vital services helping our residents feel connected and proud of Medway.

We are especially proud of our important place in our nation’s history and our rich heritage including the country’s second oldest cathedral, tallest Norman Castle, Historic Dockyard Chatham, our connections with Charles Dickens, and much more. Each year we welcome more than five million tourists. Over the coming years, we aim to enhance Medway’s reputation as a beacon in the south east for year-round cultural and festival celebrations and activities ranging from the Sweeps and Dickensian Christmas festivals to Medway Pride and the annual Gaming Festival.



SUB PRIORITIES

- ◆ **Provide effective, targeted support for our most vulnerable residents** to enable them to fulfil their potential and improve their quality of life.
- ◆ **Support people of all ages** to live the most happy, healthy, independent life possible, utilising assistive technologies.
- ◆ **Ensure that services support children in care** to thrive, fulfil their potential, build meaningful relationships and make good transitions to adulthood, so that they can live as independent lives as possible in their communities.
- ◆ **Provide creative, cultural and community services and facilities** across Medway that everyone can access and benefit from.
- ◆ Support our children and young people to ensure they are **safe, secure and stable**.
- ◆ Support all adults, including those living with disability or physical or mental illness to **live independently and stay safe**.
- ◆ People in Medway **live independent and fulfilled lives** into an active older age.



OUR PRIORITIES: PRIORITY 2

BENEFITTING FROM GOOD EDUCATION, QUALITY JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY

We want to give local people the best chances to reach their full potential and are committed to creating and fostering opportunities and environments where they can thrive.

We will ensure that all Medway's young people have access to good-quality education, and we will support them to be work-ready. Fundamental to this is to support the provision of quality learning and training that enables people of all ages to achieve. There are also strong links between our colleges and universities and local employers to help develop the skills needed for the future and open up employment opportunities.

We have an ambition to accelerate economic growth in Medway to benefit every neighbourhood. We want to see our businesses innovate and grow and attract new businesses to locate here, providing quality employment opportunities for all and enabling local people to thrive. Initiatives such as the relaunched Kent and Medway Business Fund support that work.

kmbf.co.uk

SUB PRIORITIES

- ◆ Ensure all children and young people access a **high-quality, inclusive education.**
- ◆ Work with business partners to ensure education and skills development **supports children, young people and adults to lead successful lives, and secure employment opportunities**, with targeted support for the unemployed and vulnerable groups.
- ◆ **Develop a strong mixed economy** which provides training and work opportunities that support career development, increasing high value businesses and expanding high quality employment.
- ◆ **Develop Medway's reputation as a home for creative, cultural, and green industries** to support a growing economy, maximising our national recognition as a Priority Place for culture and heritage.
- ◆ **Support the growth and diversification of business in our town centres**, reflecting the importance of placemaking and regeneration.





THE PENTAGON





OUR PRIORITIES: PRIORITY 3

ENJOYING CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The place where we live affects our health, well-being and happiness, and residents young and old often tell us that safety and cleanliness in Medway are their priorities.

We know that Medway residents do not want littering, fly tipping or untidy streets with the impact these can have on their quality of life. We will work hard to ensure that we can all enjoy our public open and green spaces.

Our Climate Change Action Plan, which sets out our journey to net zero by 2050, is already seeing positive results in Medway and we want to work with community groups to drive this work in the coming years as we all have our part to play.

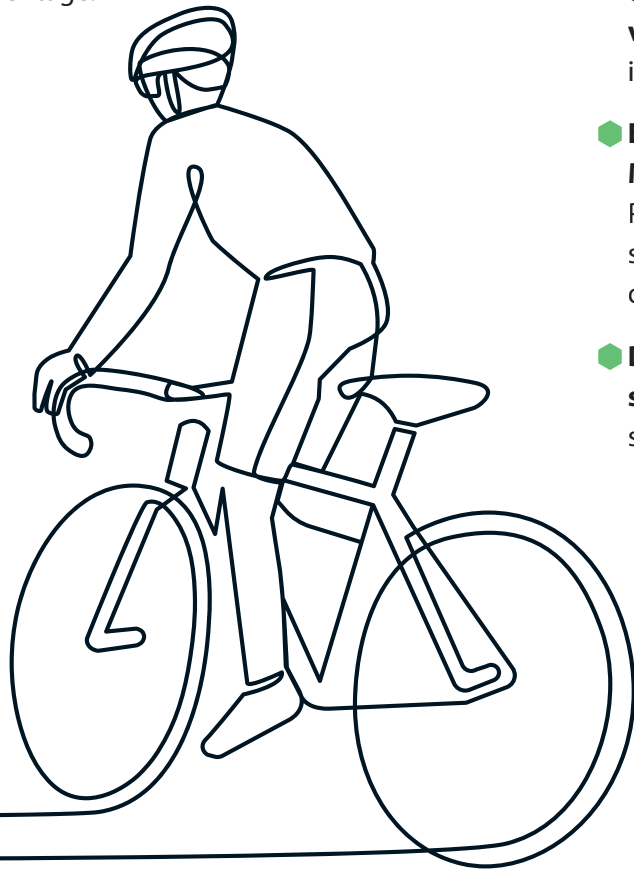
We want to ensure residents can enjoy a well-connected and sustainable travel system across Medway. We will enable increased walking



and cycling networks and work with partners to ensure an integrated, accessible, safe and sustainable public transport system across Medway and beyond.

We want people to feel safe when out on the streets of Medway and have been working hard with local agencies to improve safety on our streets and this will continue with our new Community Wardens.

We will care for our countryside and coast and celebrate our internationally recognised rural heritage.



SUB PRIORITIES

- ◆ **Create child-friendly communities** which ensure all people in Medway will feel safe and live free from harm and abuse.
- ◆ **Celebrating the individuality of all parts of the Medway community**, ensuring services, events and activities reflect and support the diverse communities of Medway.
- ◆ **Provide improved opportunities to walk, cycle, use public transport and electric vehicles**, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.
- ◆ **Engage Medway's residents in ensuring Medway is clean and well maintained.** Protect and enhance Medway's river, green spaces and environmental assets as a means of effectively **tackling climate change**.
- ◆ **Develop and facilitate easy-to-use and simple digital solutions** for residents to access services and engage with the public sector.



OUR PRIORITIES: PRIORITY 4

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR ALL

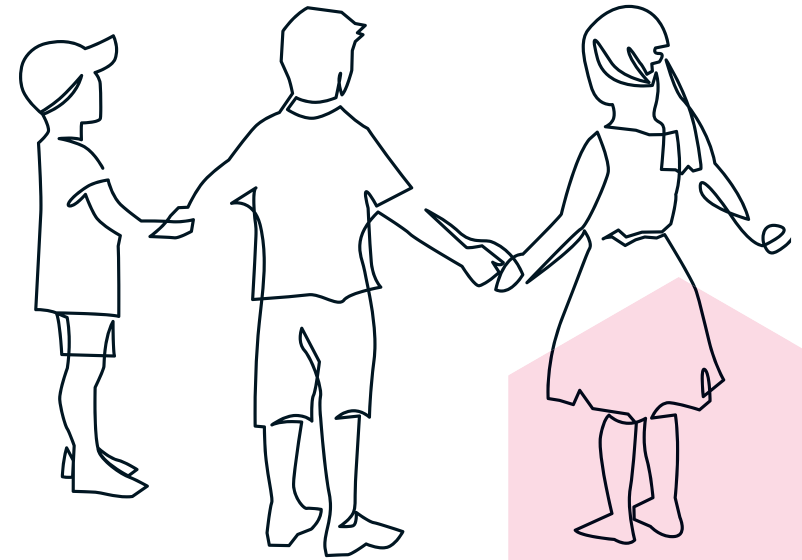
Central to our vision of enabling people to thrive and realise their potential is improving the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in Medway.

Our goal is to promote and improve health and well-being, giving our residents the opportunity to lead healthy, fulfilling and independent lives for longer, whilst knowing that they can connect to the right support at the right time.

We recognise that access to health and care services and support is important, but we also know the challenges we face in Medway with areas of relatively high deprivation. Inequality undoubtedly affects people's health, evident in the varying life expectancy across different

wards in Medway. We aim to tackle these inequalities through our work and important initiatives are now underway in Medway, including a major project focusing on tackling the wider determinants of health, for example employment, education, transport and community networks.

Working in partnership with our health services and key health partners to tackle these challenges will be a key priority for us in the coming years.



The council spends more than 60% of its budget caring for the most vulnerable in our community.

With an ageing population and increasing demand on our health and social care services, there are vastly increased pressures on our budgets and we will prioritise our spend to ensure we can care for those most in need and maximise the way we use our resources.

Through our focus on prevention, we will address the factors that influence health and wellbeing, with a primary focus on reducing health inequalities.



SUB PRIORITIES

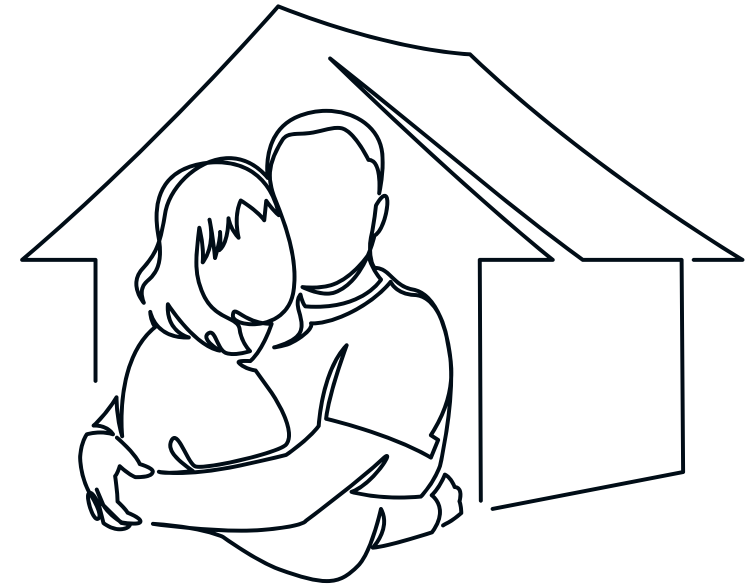
- ◆ **Empowering people to achieve good health and wellbeing through prevention**, with access to local activities and services that will enable and support them to lead independent, active and healthy lifestyles.
- ◆ **Support families** to give their children the best start in life.
- ◆ **Work collaboratively to grow participation** year on year in recreational play, sport and physical activity as a means of promoting improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- ◆ **Work in partnership with communities and organisations** to address the issues that negatively affect health and wellbeing, making sure everyone has the opportunity to live long, healthy lives.



OUR PRIORITIES: PRIORITY 5

LIVING IN GOOD-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOMES

Housing is an important determinant of health, wellbeing and stability. Access to affordable, safe and stable homes provides a foundation for a community that enables individuals to thrive, find employment and raise families.



We are already taking action to tackle the rising costs of temporary accommodation and are investing £42million in buying around 150 properties to provide temporary accommodation to reduce reliance on the private rented sector. Other plans being implemented include increasing the number of long-term leased properties on our books and setting up our own letting agency to help prevent the need for people to access temporary accommodation in the first place.

Through our Local Plan we will ensure that we provide the right types of homes in the right places for our growing communities and, in the coming years, will work with developers to ensure we get this right. We have seen some excellent developments across Medway in recent years including Rochester Riverside, St Mary's Island,

Kitchener Barracks and Centenary Gardens, the largest social housing bungalow development in the country at the time it was completed.

As a social landlord to more than 3,000 households we will be focused on improving the satisfaction of our tenants. We have been investing in new social housing property stock such as sites developed in Twydall, Copenhagen Road in Gillingham and Longley Road in Rainham, providing more than 120 new homes for local people in the past eight years, and our plan is to grow our housing stock by one percent each year.

We will also ensure we assist people with specific accommodation needs including older people, people with disabilities, people needing specialist support and those who find themselves homeless.

SUB PRIORITIES

- ◆ **Increase the supply of good quality, energy efficient and sustainable homes** that reflect the needs of the communities in Medway.
- ◆ **Implement a Local Plan** which reflects the needs of the communities in Medway, supporting a transition to a low-carbon future promoting affordable, energy efficient and sustainable homes.
- ◆ **Assist people with specific accommodation needs** including older people, people with disabilities, people needing specialist support and those who find themselves homeless.
- ◆ **Engage with communities** to identify ways to improve streets, parks and local surroundings which create vibrant places to live and enhance the quality of people's lives.
- ◆ **Ensure the council's housing stock is good quality, efficient, free from damp and mould** and tenants are at the heart of decision making.





OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Our values and behaviours are at the heart of what we do, defining us as an organisation and underpinning how we work with others:

COLLABORATIVE

Working together
– One Medway



PROUD TO BE MEDWAY

Taking pride in what we do



CARING

Compassionate towards our communities and colleagues



AMBITIOUS FOR MEDWAY

Innovative, bold and positive



TRUSTED

We do what we say, are open and accountable



RESPECTFUL

Valuing Medway's diversity, heritage and each other



OUR PRINCIPLES

To support our priorities, we have developed a number of principles that will inform the work we do at Medway Council. Together, these priorities, values and behaviours and principles will drive service delivery and performance.

Financial sustainability and value for money

We know that residents expect to see that taxpayers' money is well spent. In a climate of reducing financial resources and increasing levels of demand for our services, particularly for Adult and Children Social Care Services, Medway Council has committed to an ambitious improvement journey, rethinking how we operate, support, and deliver high quality services to help us deliver our One Medway Council Plan in a financially sustainable way.

One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan is an action plan that responds to the Financial Resilience Review carried out by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy at the end of 2023. Our journey will involve harnessing the benefits of new technologies, prioritising resources to where they are most impactful, demanding the best value for money and ensuring that our services are aligned with our partners such that together we achieve more. We are committed to maintaining good quality services and continuing to improve the outcomes for our residents.

Climate action

Medway Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and committed to reduce our carbon footprint, provide our local community with a clean, green future, and be a place that people want to work and live that has a sustainable future.

Our *Climate Change Action Plan* sets out our priority areas for action across all our areas of service delivery.

[medway.gov.uk/climatechangeplan](https://www.medway.gov.uk/climatechangeplan)





Equality and diversity in all we do

Medway is a vibrant and diverse community which welcomes people of all cultures, backgrounds and religions. We will work to become a more equal and inclusive Medway, where everyone can thrive at all stages of their life.

We want everyone in Medway to feel included and valued and want to make a difference to the lives of the people of Medway by ensuring equality of access to our services, inclusion and respect for people from different backgrounds, challenging inequality, harassment, discrimination and racism.

We will also ensure that the council's own employment practices are fair and transparent with equal opportunities for all.

Child-Friendly Medway

Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve. This responsibility in Medway Council falls to every councillor and member of staff who are charged with looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people and we will ensure that everyone plays their part in doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver – to give them the opportunities that other children get.

We want to ensure that the voice of our children and young people is at the heart of our thinking, planning and policymaking. This cross-cutting pledge runs through all our services ensuring that we keep young people at the centre of our services, helping them to aim high and achieve their dreams and goals for the future.

In addition, our dedicated Child-Friendly Medway project provides a universal year-round programme of fun, educational and inclusive activities for babies and youngsters up to 25.

[medway.gov.uk/childfriendly](https://www.medway.gov.uk/childfriendly)

Working in partnership

Medway has a substantial track record of working successfully in partnership with others from education, business and health to regeneration and cultural organisations. By working together with a clear vision and committed resources harnessing skills, knowledge, funding and passion, we can have a significant and positive impact in our communities.





OUR TEAMS

Our teams are essential to the delivery of our priorities and we are very proud of our colleagues. We want to be an employer of choice, to recruit and retain high quality, motivated individuals and ensure they are qualified and skilled for their roles.



The council's *Workforce Strategy* sets out the strategic direction for our employees in Medway Council. It places people as a strategic driver at the heart of our organisation and is pivotal in helping us achieve our strategic ambition, It focusses on three key cross-cutting strategic priorities:

- ◆ **Workforce 2028**
- ◆ **Enabling our People**
- ◆ **Engaging, Reward and Wellbeing**

Each priority has a set of actions and interventions which builds upon what is already under way across Medway Council and makes fresh commitments on how we will shape our workforce for the future. It is rightly ambitious for Medway Council, yet it is also practical and deliverable. It must be delivered for us to meet commitments made to our residents, and ensure we are able to successfully tackle the challenges of the future.



OUR COMMUNITIES - ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

We are committed to putting the voice of residents and communities at the heart of everything we do.

As well as shaping our policy and activities in partnership with organisations across Medway, we will ensure that we work with residents, businesses and community organisations to identify and respond to their views and concerns.

We will communicate with local people through a variety of channels on a regular basis ensuring our residents are kept informed of events and developments, and have the opportunity to have their say.





OUR PERFORMANCE

Each of our priorities has a series of sub priorities and a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) sit within each sub priority, setting out what we aim to achieve over the coming years.

We will monitor our performance against these KPIs on a regular basis and provide an annual update.

Our *One Medway Council Plan* will also be annually reviewed and refreshed to ensure it remains up-to-date.





OUR STRATEGIES

This One Medway Council Plan and its priorities are supported by a range of strategies which set out in more detail what the council will deliver to achieve our vision of One Medway.

- ◆ **One Medway Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan**
- ◆ **Medium Term Financial Outlook**
- ◆ **Capital Strategy 23/24**
- ◆ **Treasury Management Strategy 23/24**
- ◆ **Risk Strategy**
- ◆ **People Strategy 2021-2025**
- ◆ **Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028**
- ◆ **Send Strategy 2022-25**
- ◆ **Local Plan (in development)**
- ◆ **Adult Social Care Strategy 2021-2025**







MEDWAY