

2015/16

# Strategic Plan Quarter 3 Update



For further information about  
Performance Management at Maidstone  
Council, please contact Alex Munden,  
Performance Officer.

**OUR VISION**

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**OUR MISSION**

Putting People First.

**PRIORITY 1**

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

**PRIORITY 2**

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing.

Respecting the character of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

**OUR VALUES**

**Service**

Everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

**Teamwork**

Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

**Responsibility**

We work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

**Integrity**

We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything we do.

**Value**

Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

**Equality**

Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

# Understanding Performance

## Key to performance ratings

Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year for example, 2014/15 annual performance will be compared against 2013/14 annual performance. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.

The second way in which performance is assessed looks at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. Some indicators may show an asterix (\*) after the figure, these are provisional figures that are awaiting confirmation.

Data Only indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due to be reported or where there is a delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	No target to measure performance against
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has not changed / been sustained
	Performance has declined
	No previous performance to judge against

Strategic Actions have also been rated using the RAG Status. The ratings are there to provide an assessment of how well the strategy or plan is progressing.

## Performance Summary

This is the third quarterly updates on Maidstone Borough Council’s Strategic Plan 2015-20. It sets out how we are performing against the Key performance indicator and Strategic actions that directly contribute to the achievement of our priorities: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all and Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough. Outlined below is a summary of the ratings and direction that have been given at quarter 3.

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	4	2	2	4	12
Strategic Actions	9	3	0		12
Direction	Up	Across	Down	N/A	Total
KPIs	5	0	5	2	12

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all

### Providing a Clean and Safe Environment

Over the past 5 years, Maidstone Borough Council has demonstrated its commitment to deliver cost effective and sustainable waste and recycling services as a result our recycling rate has improved significantly. Maidstone does not experience high levels of crime. We have with our Community Safety Partnership agreed that reducing anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, reoffending and improving road safety are our priorities up until 2018. During the first year of the Strategic Plan the Council has introduced a street cleansing service designed to meet the current and future needs of the Borough

#### Waste & Recycling Strategy Quarter 3 Update

In the last quarter, an analysis of waste composition was completed on behalf of the Mid-Kent councils and Canterbury City Council. The project looked at the waste produced by 250 individual households and 250 flatted properties per authority to see which materials are being recycled and which aren't. The results of the analysis will allow us to tailor future communications to advise which materials we are able to collect for recycling and to promote the capture of commonly missed items.

The Big Maidstone Food Waste Challenge was launched to incentivise use of the weekly food waste service with radio, online and printed advertising. Currently 168 residents are signed up to support the scheme and the first quarter prize draw has been completed with prizes to be distributed at the beginning of February.

Engagement activities have taken place in the last quarter, including pre-Christmas engagement to highlight additional recycling over the festive period, and a Green Santa event after Christmas to promote reuse.

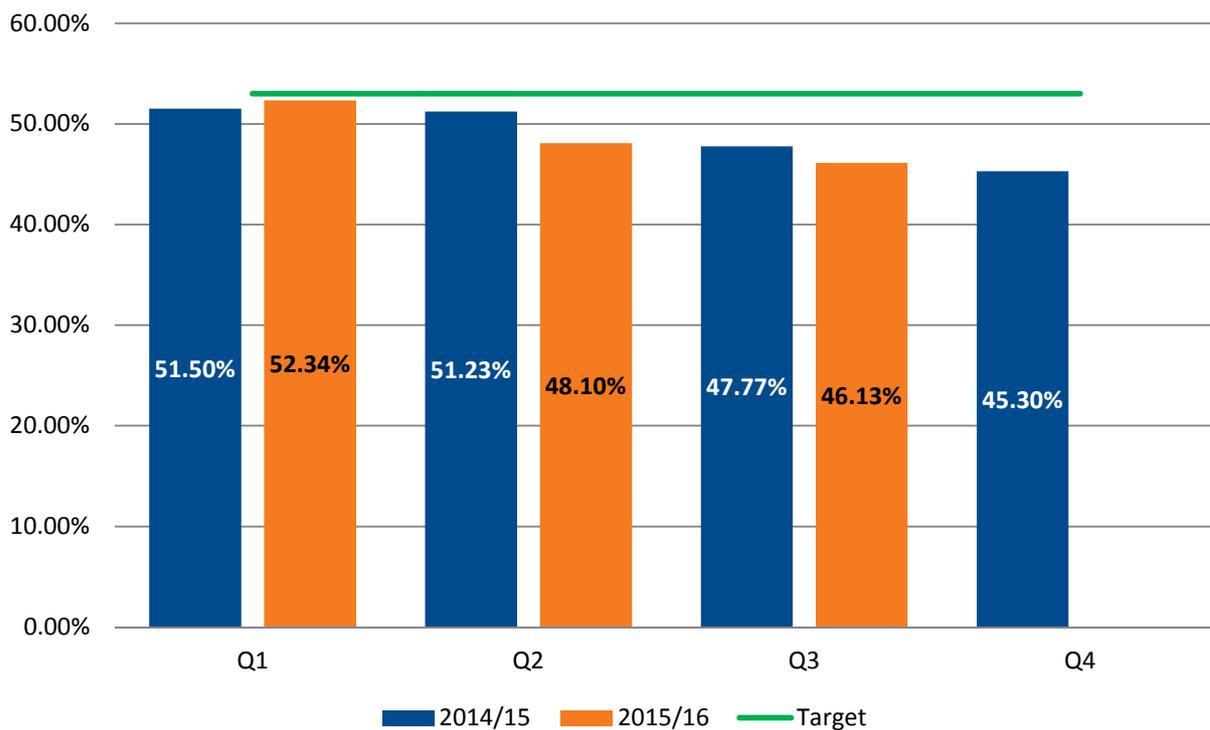
A trial of 1100 litre recycling bins is taking place at communal properties and will also be trialling reusable bags to assist residents in flats with separating recycling in the home. The bags will be distributed in the early part of 2016.

The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) has also been successful in securing external funding for a new year communications drive to support the council's recycling. Part of the funding was spent on a Kent-wide leaflet that looked to encourage recycling of plastics.

### Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting

The indicator measures the percentage of household waste that has been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This is a key measure of local authorities' progress in moving management of household waste up the hierarchy, consistent with the Government's national strategy for waste management. The Government expects local authorities to maximise the percentage of waste reused, recycled and composted.

Current Performance	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
46.13%	53.00%	-6.87%	↓	🔴	Target will not be achieved



**Performance Comment:** Recycling for the current quarter has dropped by 1.64% compared to the same quarter last year. The current percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting for the year to date is 47.93%. If the performance trend from last year continues, it is likely the target will not be achieved.

There is always additional refuse side waste on the first collection after Christmas and New Year and this has resulted in a larger than usual amount of refuse being collected. We also collected an increased amount of recycling, however the higher tonnage of refuse has resulted in an overall drop in the reuse, recycling and composting percentage. One load of recycling was rejected from the Materials Recycling Facility in November.

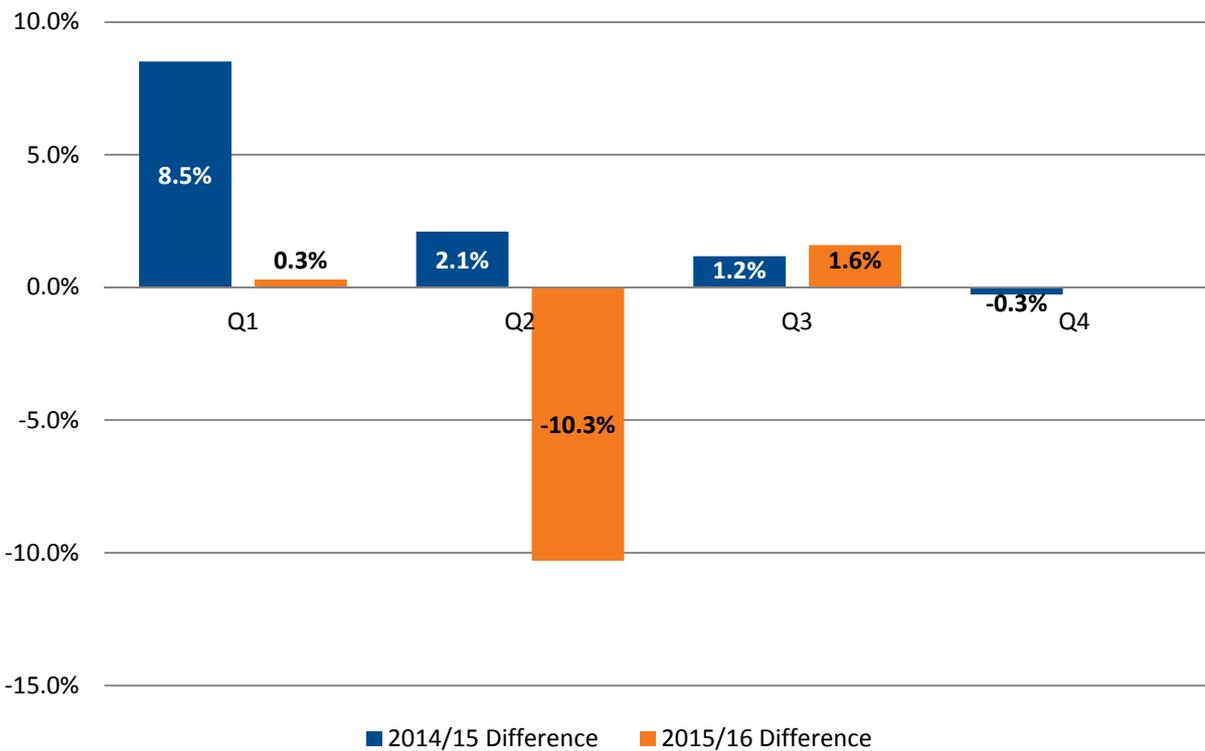
## Community Safety Strategy Update

The data from the Community Safety crime and disorder audit is currently being reviewed. The emerging trends and issues will be used to implement new priorities in the strategic assessment for the Safer Maidstone Partnership. This will also be used to evaluate the progress made against priorities set last year, and the effectiveness of the work. Priorities around 'Prevent' and child sexual exploitation have featured heavily in this quarters work. Awareness sessions and training have been delivered to priority organisations in Maidstone alongside staff at Maidstone Borough Council to highlight the issue of extremism and radicalisation. This work fits closely with the Kent Police control strategy that was recently released. The Safer Maidstone Partnership has sub groups that are delivering a number of projects involving; road safety, substance misuse, domestic abuse, reducing reoffending, and self-neglect & hoarding.

### Percentage Change in All Recorded Crime (Information Only)

This indicator reports the percentage change in the number of all recorded crime in the borough to provide an indication of the crime trends in the borough and help assess the impact of the work the Council undertakes in relation to Community Safety. The 2014/15 Difference shows the percentage difference in the volume of crime between the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15. The 2015/16 difference shows the same for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16. *Note: Improving performance for this indicator is demonstrated by a negative figure.*

Current Performance	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
1.6%					



**Performance Comment:** For quarter 3 2015 (October to December), the volume of all recorded crime in the borough has increased by 1.6% compared to quarter 3 in 2014/15. For the year to date there has been a 3 decline in all recorded crime compared to the previous year. Data for the year to date shows that Anti-social Behaviour(ASB) incidents have declined by 7.9% when compared to the same period in 2014/15. 23% of all ASB incidents occurred in the High Street Ward. Violent Crime in the Borough has increased by 20%, and number of sexual offences has increased by 15%. There has however, been a 15% decrease in vehicle crime.

### Air Quality Strategy Quarter 3 Update

The Low Emission Strategy consultation period ended prior to the Christmas break. However, responses were rather low and the decision was taken to extend the consultation period. This is due to end on 15 January 2016 and the feedback will be reported to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee in the early Spring. The report will set out the next steps for agreeing the action plan for the Low Emission Strategy.

### Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing

Deprivation in the borough is lower than average, however 14.1% (4,100) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a difference in life expectancy of men and women; women are expected to live 3 years longer than men and there is a 13 year gap between the ward with the highest life expectancy and the one with the lowest life expectancy.

### Health Inequalities Action Plan Update

Work has continued on commissioning and managing the projects to ensure health equality in the Borough. The team are in the process of developing a campaign to address high risk drinking with the Safer Maidstone Partnership Substance Misuse Group.

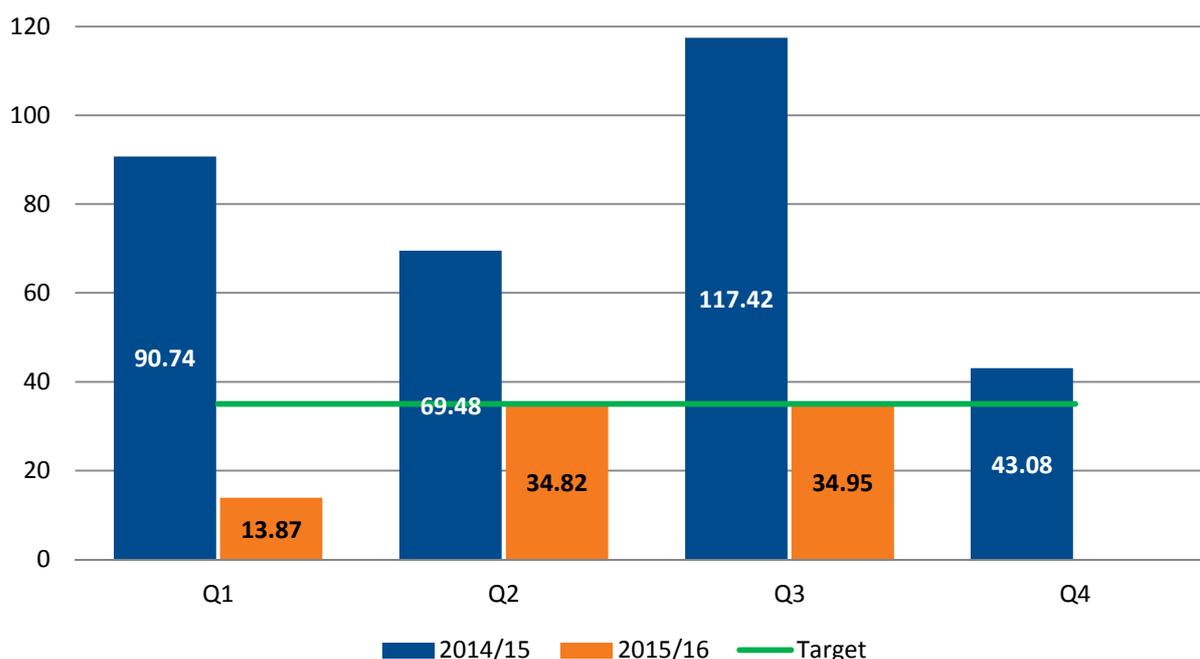
Work has continued with Kent County Council Public Health and West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a programme of NHS Health Checks and MOT's for clients attending Maidstone Day Centre. The aim is to intervene early and provide support to reduce serious health risks.

Achievements in quarter 3 include the delivery of cooking classes to tenants at Aylesbury House and the signing up of 27 businesses to the Kent Healthy Business Awards, which aim to improve employee's health and wellbeing.

### Average number of days taken to process Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are used to provide home adaptations for disabled people, generally to improve access - access into and around the home and access to, or provision of, basic amenities such as bathing and a WC. They are an important part of the work we do to supporting people who want to remain independent or stay in their own home.

Current Performance	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
34.95 days	35.00 days	-0.05 days	↑	✓	Target will be met



**Performance Comment:** Last financial year started with a backlog in applications. From quarter 3 2014/15 onwards the Private Sector Housing Manager has been reviewing all new applications on a weekly basis. During quarter 3 2015/16, 43 applications were processed. So far for 2015/16 demand for DFG's is lower than in 2014/15 with 77 applications received to date compared to 103 for the same period in 2014/15. For the year to date, the average time to process DFG's is 28.63 days. Therefore, it is expected the annual target will be met.

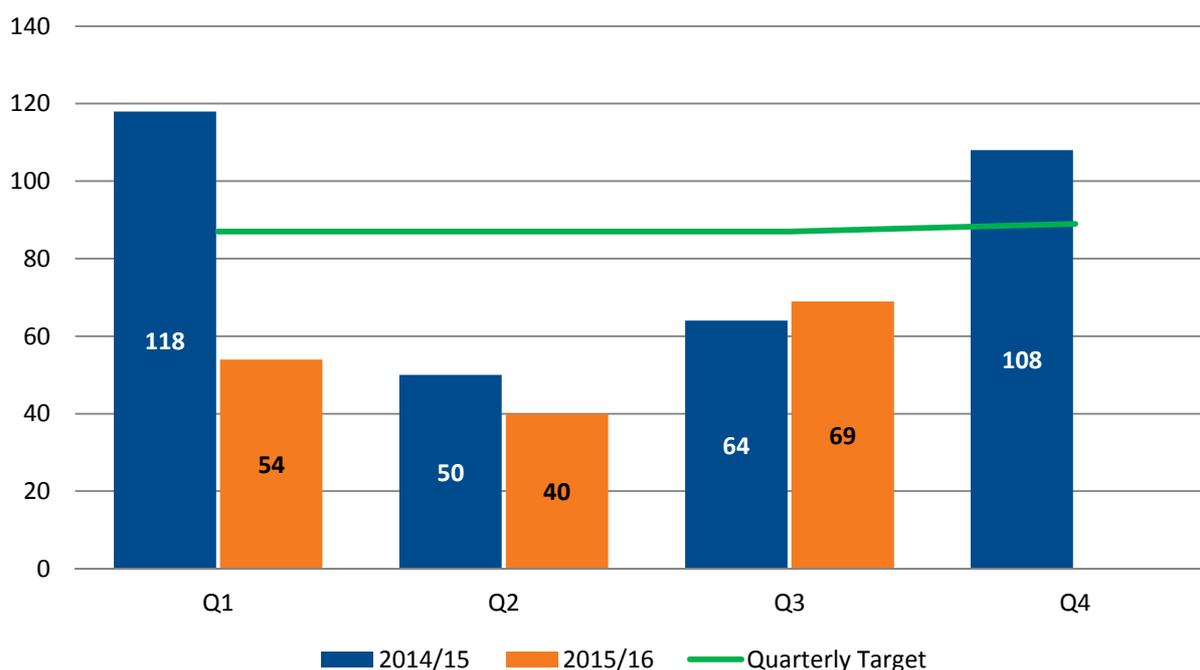
## Housing Strategy Update

The consultation period for the Housing Strategy themes concluded at the end of December 2015. Two events were held with key stakeholders that included senior representatives from the house building industry, housing associations, Kent County Council and from the voluntary sector. Colleagues from the Policy & Information Team supported the events and the Service has received very positive feedback from those attending the events. In addition, the Council's Communication Team has assisted with the broader consultation through mixed media sources including a web-based questionnaire that was open to all members of the public. The consultation has provided useful feedback and enabled the team to adapt or amend certain parts of the Strategy. The respondents were supportive of the approach adopted by the Council, endorsing the priority themes and the rationale behind them. The next stage is for the consultation outcome to be reported to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee in January 2016. The draft Strategy will then be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee in February, and recommended for adoption by Council in March. This timetable remains on track.

### Number of households prevented from becoming homeless through the intervention of housing advice

The provision of comprehensive advice plays an important part in delivering the Council's strategy for preventing homelessness in Maidstone. This measure provides an indication of the effectiveness of housing advice given by the Council in preventing homelessness or the threat of homelessness. The annual target is split to give a quarterly target of 87.

Current Value	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
69	350	-18	↑	🛑	Target will not be achieved



**Performance Comment:** In 2014/15, 340 households were prevented from becoming homeless due to intervention from the Housing Team. This was against a target of 350. The team started the year with a vacant post, which influenced the number of preventions they were able to process during quarter 1. For quarter 2 (July to September) ongoing staffing issues coupled with an increase in approaches has meant that this figure remains low. Housing Advisor staffing issues remained in Quarter 3. Despite this, performance improved compared to the same Quarter in 2014/15. Other prevention methods are now included in this figure, giving a more realistic view of the service. Homefinder Bonds and Assertive Outreach Reliefs accounted for 33% of preventions in November and December. There was also a larger than usual volume of advice only/unsuccessful preventions in December. It is expected the annual target will not be met.

## Respecting the Character of our Borough

Maidstone is the county town of Kent. In terms of its geography, it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the borough population live in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time protecting the environment and landscape that makes the borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work and visit.

### Communications & Engagement Strategy Update 📢

A review of external communications channels is underway with Members and Parish Councillors having received surveys, the results of which will help inform the refresh of the strategy for 2016 -17. A communications plan for Local Democracy Week was delivered in October, including social media, PR, borough update and engagement events in the town centre. This was complimented by a sustained 'Have Your Say' campaign via multiple channels, designed to encourage residents to discover how they can get involved in decision-making.

The results of the resident survey are being analysed. Data from this survey will be used to inform the refresh of the Communications & Engagement Strategy. In particular, we will be looking for significant correlations between disengagement / dissatisfaction and specific demographics. This information will also be used to look into the feasibility of an online version of the Borough Update.

We held a highly successful 'Our Day' twitter campaign in November with a total reach of over 600k people. Areas of focus included Value for Money, service provision, 'Get involved' and statistical information on 'everyday business' (e.g. number of calls) which were very well received.

To promote Value for Money, the next edition of Downs Mail will include features on 'A Sustainable Future for Mote Park', Universal Credit, E-Billing and financial challenges facing the council, particularly in relation to the Government Finance Settlement.

NB: Parish charter developed in consultation with parishes and KALC

### **No Performance Indicators for quarterly monitoring**

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

There is always something to see or do in Maidstone with the river, two museums and a theatre in the town centre, four green flag parks, a well-used leisure centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held across the Borough and throughout the year.

#### Festivals & Events Strategy Update

The Strategy was adopted in August 2014. Work will be undertaken to develop an on-line toolkit for event organisers that will be tested with local stakeholder organisations through the Destination Management Plan (DMP). We were successful in bringing a new major music festival to Mote Park, Ramblin' Man, which took place at the end of July 15. This resulted in excellent feedback from those that attended and has raised the profile of Maidstone Borough as an international festival destination. This event is scheduled to take place again in 2016 as well as The Social. This is supported by the Heritage, Culture, and Leisure (HCL) Committee on the agreement that additional event management issues are resolved. A report will be taken to HCL Committee on 1 March 2016 asking for approval to set the maximum number of large amplified music events we will permit in our parks each year. A further report will follow later in 2016 outlining the options for the future of the Mela and Proms in the Park, which are currently funded by Maidstone Borough Council. A no clash diary for event's organisers has been developed via the DMP events group. This will enable our event organisers to plan events and avoid clashes. Calendar gaps can then be identified and promoted to event's organisers.

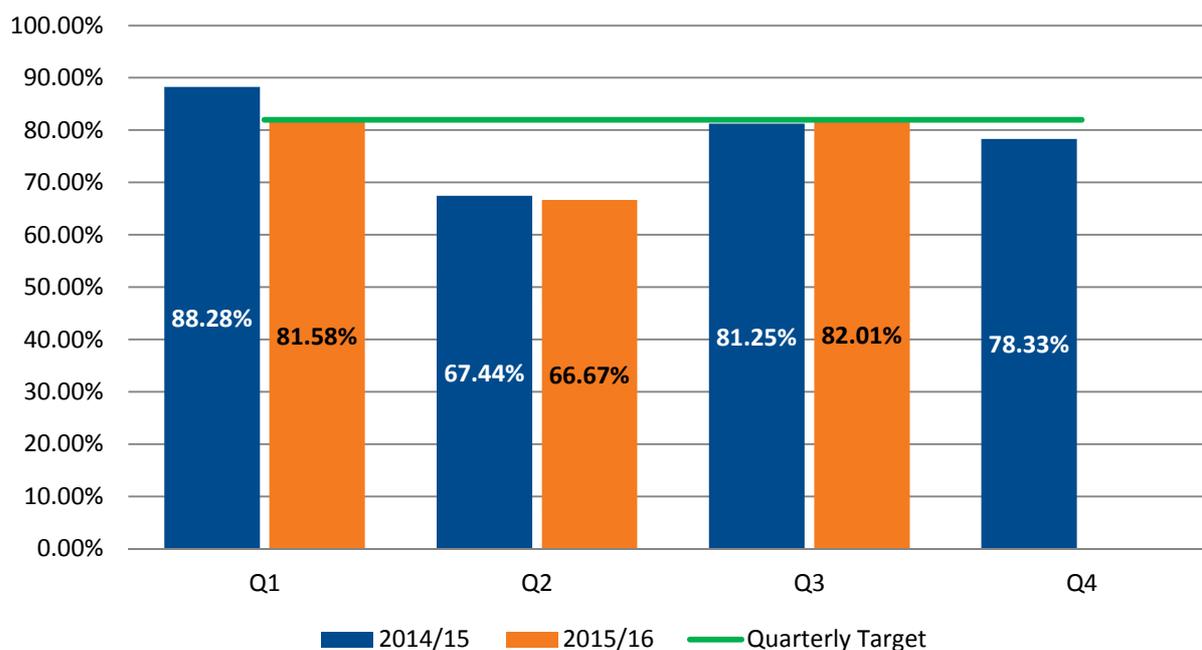
#### Destination Management Plan Update

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) was agreed by the Steering Group on 3 July 15 and adopted by Heritage, Culture and Leisure (HCL) Committee on 13 July 15. The DMP Board has now been established and will oversee the delivery of the three-year action plan, together with four Working Groups that are tasked with delivering the action plans. The Board is now meeting bimonthly and all working groups are established and meeting regularly. Action plans for each group have been reviewed and prioritised and are being costed. There have been some quick wins such as a 'no-clash diary' for event organisers, a Shared Story Toolkit, and an image library on the stakeholder area of the Visit Maidstone website. Groups are gathering additional information to inform the actions such as surveying Parishes to understand what attractions, events and facilities exist in their areas. The DMP has a small £20k budget and this will focus on commissioning new photography and video, a Shared Story marketing campaign, and bids from the working groups to deliver against the action plans.

### User Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre

The Council recognises that access to leisure services plays an important role in making somewhere a good place to live. This indicator measures customer satisfaction with the Leisure Centre.

Current Performance	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
82.01%	82.00%	+0.01%	↑	🚩	Target will be slightly missed

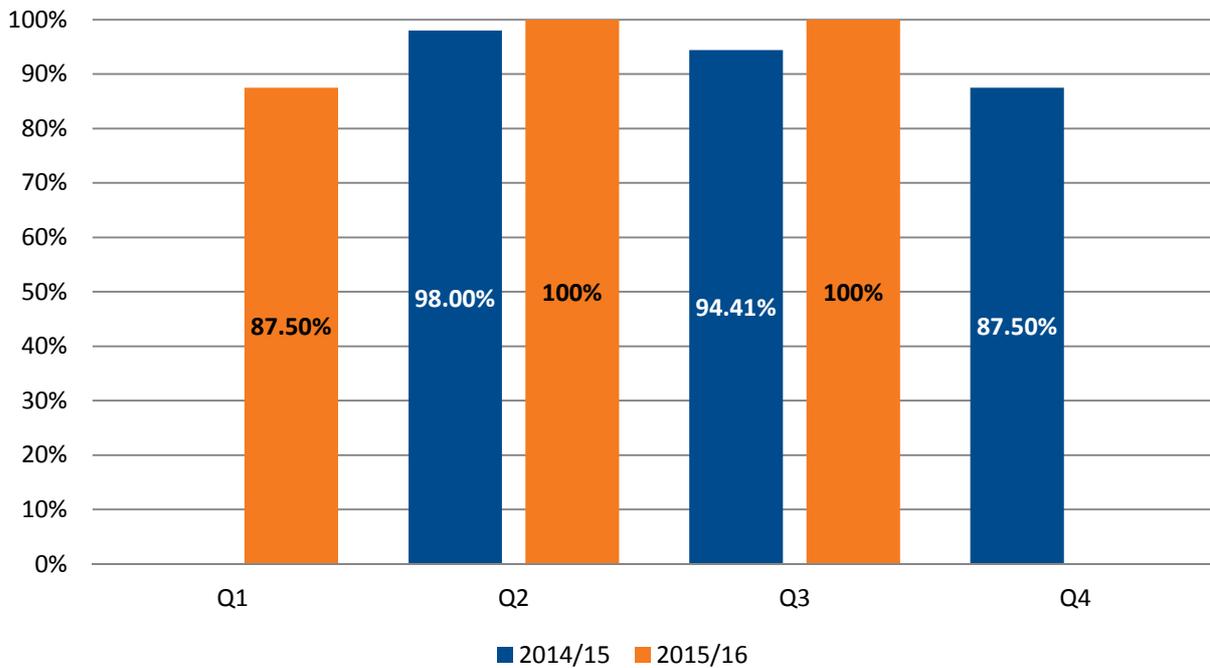


**Performance Comment:** The leisure centre collects through interactive tablets placed at key points within the centre. Serco incentivised responses as they had previously suffered technical difficulties which discouraged responses. Quarter 3 responses saw a significant increase, receiving 189 responses. They are required to gather at least 300 survey responses for the year (245 have been received to date). For the year to date satisfaction with the leisure centre is 80.8% and is currently rated amber. In 2014 a satisfaction rating of 81.78% was achieved. At this stage, it is expected that the annual target will be slightly missed.

### User Satisfaction with the Hazlitt Theatre

The Council recognises that access to leisure services plays an important role in making somewhere a good place to live. This indicator measures customer satisfaction with the Hazlitt.

Current Performance	2015/16 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
100%					



**Performance Comment:** There were no satisfaction surveys completed for Quarter 1 in 2014/15 and therefore no comparative data is available for this period. 31 surveys have been completed for 2015/16 to date, compared to 211 at this point last year. We will be discussing ways to improve the response rate with Park Wood Leisure. The importance of surveying customer satisfaction has been communicated to Hazlitt Theatre staff. The year to date satisfaction is currently 93.5%. It is expected that the annual performance for this indicator will be in excess of 90%.

### Income generated from commercial leisure and culture activities

The Council has a Commercialisation Strategy that defines how revenue will be generated to make a positive financial contribution. This included making better use of our culture and leisure assets to reduce the net cost of delivery and improve the offer to residents and visitors. The Strategy specifies annual financial targets and the indicator is defined and measured in monetary terms against those annual targets.

Current Performance	2015/16 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
£200,000	£200,000	£0	N/A		Target will be met

**Performance Comment:** The projects delivered under the commercialisation programme include the purchase and operation of Phoenix House and the installation of renewable energy technologies (solar panels). The team has also taken the Mote Park café back in-house and the introduced parking charges in Mote Park. The current performance figure represents the projected performance of these projects for this financial year.

### Enhancing the Appeal of the Town Centre for Everyone

Maidstone has had a historically thriving town centre however, we need to ensure that we keep pace with the changing economic environment and continue to meet the demands of businesses and consumers. Investment in Maidstone town centre is needed if it is to continue to be a popular place for leisure, to live, shop and work.

#### No Performance Indicators for quarterly monitoring

### Town Centre Vision Update

A report was taken to Policy and Resources Committee on 16 December setting out a vision, plan and programme of projects to develop, improve and enhance Maidstone Town Centre in line with the Council's approved policies and emerging aspirations. These include the emerging Local Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy and Destination Management Plan and will reflect our rich culture and heritage.

A 5-year plan was outlined to ensure that the County Town achieves its full potential as the fastest growing, most dynamic urban centre in Kent with a high quality environment and unique heritage appeal. Through this plan, we will place the emphasis on growth and dynamism. Specifically, we aim to; enhance the retail, leisure and business, facilitate increased private sector investment, and attract occupiers to stimulate growth. We are also looking to exploit our cultural assets, and improve transport links and hubs for our visitors and residents, while also making the town centre a walking centre.

There is a focus on creating more homes, and raising the quality of the built environment, with the holistic aim of encouraging more visitors and making the Borough more welcoming. The plan will consider introducing Smart technologies in the town centre, and will introduce work to encourage growth of the night-time and twilight economy.

By securing support for and promoting this vision we will improve clarity and certainty for investors and strengthen public/private sector partnerships in order to support its delivery,

unlock third party investment, bring forward sites and attract external funding and inward investment. Committee approved the formation of a Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board to drive this programme forward and the draft five-year investment and development plan. The committee endorsed accelerating the development of major sites and attracting business start-ups into the town centre. They also support the tackling of eyesore sites, transportation, public realm improvements, utilising our culture and heritage, and developing residential areas.

## Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough

Maidstone is strategically situated between London and the channel ports and is serviced by two motorway networks, the M20 and M2, with rail connections to central London. With regard to travelling in and around the Borough by car, congestion is an issue particularly at peak time in the town centre. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges.

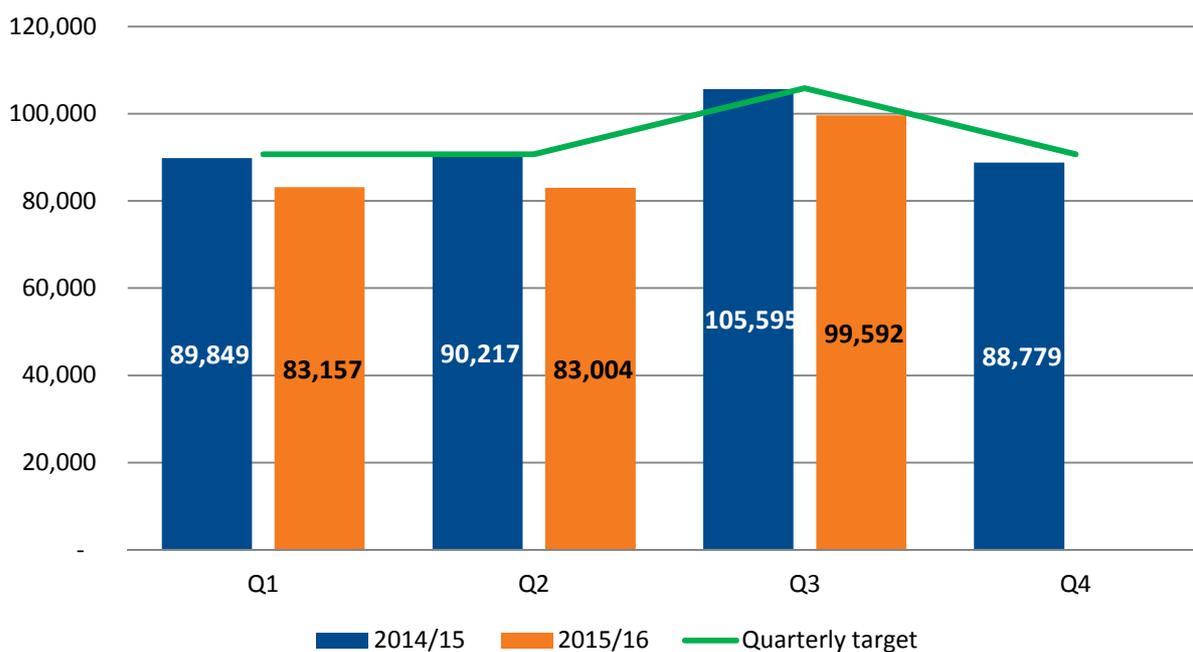
#### Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update

Considerable work has been completed on the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and a further report was taken to Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation (SPS&T) Committee on 1st December 2015. Members required certain modifications to the ITS and account was also taken of a resolution of Maidstone Joint Transport Board (MJTB) on 7th December 2015, to continue joint working by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council officers. The draft ITS was presented to SPS&T Committee on 14th December 2015 which was approved for consultation, together with the Cycling and Walking Strategy, parking and low emission vehicle proposals and previously agreed highways improvements. Further work is continuing with KCC officers on transport modelling as evidence base for the Local Plan. It has been agreed that the ITS will go out for consultation on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Number of on-board Park & Ride bus transactions

The Indicator compares the on bus transaction figure (these are the cash sales to passengers boarding buses) on Park and Ride with the one for the same period of the previous year therefore, assessing fluctuations in the service usage. A calculation is made to take into account ten trip passes and other concessions.

Current Value	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
99,592	378,000	-7,716	↓	⚠	Target will not be achieved



**Performance Comment:** Compared to last year on-board Park & Ride transactions have declined by 6% for quarter 3. The Park & Ride service has seen a decrease in patronage of 7% for the year to date. The third quarter is the busiest for the service due to seasonal shopping. The road surface and appearance of the Willington Street site was improved, however there are no further planned actions to increase Park & Ride usage at this stage. The closure of Sittingbourne Road site in February will affect usage further.

### Promoting a range of employment skills and opportunities across the borough

There were 83,100 people employed in the Maidstone economy in 201/15 with a high proportion in the public sector, reflecting the town's status as Kent's County Town and administrative capital. There were 6,735 registered businesses in Maidstone in 2015, equivalent to 42 businesses per 1,000 population, compared to 39 for England and an above average rate of self-employment.

## Economic Development Strategy Update

Progress towards the Economic Development Strategy's stated four key actions is as follows. Maidstone Town Centre: the Strategic Advisory Board's first meeting is planned for 2nd February 2016. The December Policy & Resources Committee report approved Town Centre next steps and actions.

The Kent Medical Campus was awarded Enterprise Zone status in the Autumn Statement. The proposed business park on the Woodcut Farm site at Junction 8 of the M20 will provide a new employment allocation in the Borough, presented in the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation. Its inclusion in the Local Plan is a big step forwards for the Economic Development Strategy.

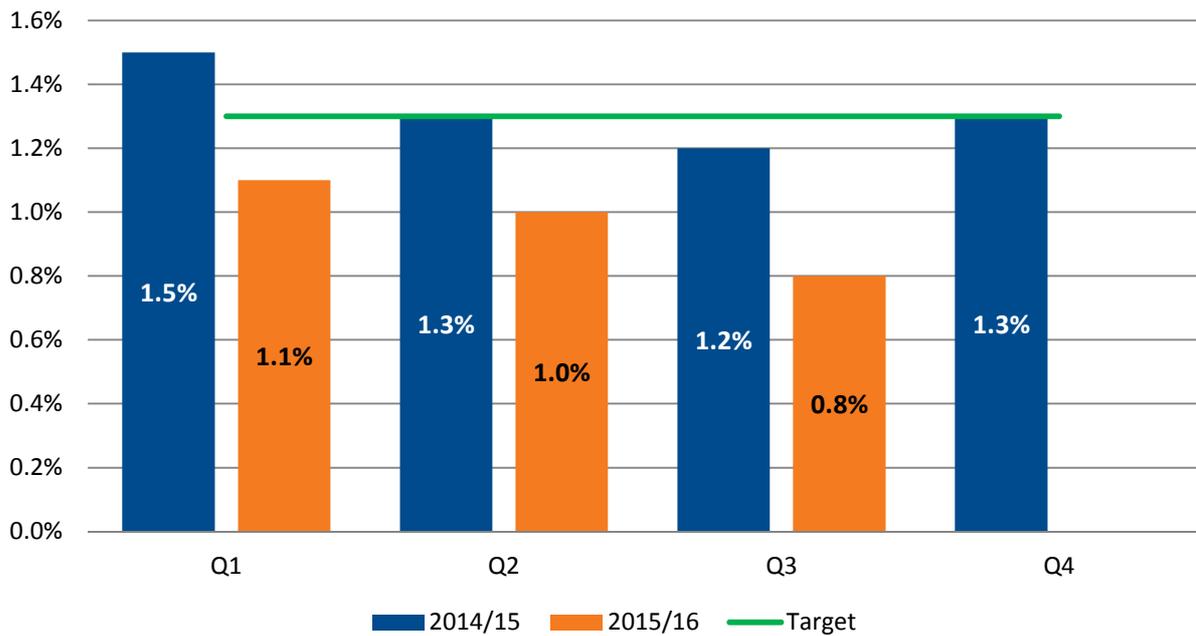
The end of park and ride services at Eclipse Business Park on 2nd February 2016 offers the opportunity for new commercial occupiers and a new vision for business development in that area.

Other actions include an extension of the Business Terrace into the member's area that opened in December, adding 4 offices, which are now occupied.

### Percentage of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance

JSA claimant count records the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). People claiming JSA must declare that they are out of work, capable of, available for and actively seeking work during the week in which the claim is made. This indicator is expressed as a proportion of the resident population of the area aged 16 to 64 years old and is provided by the office of National Statistics. A lower figure indicates good performance.

Current Value	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
0.8%	1.3%	-0.5%	↑	✓	Target will be met

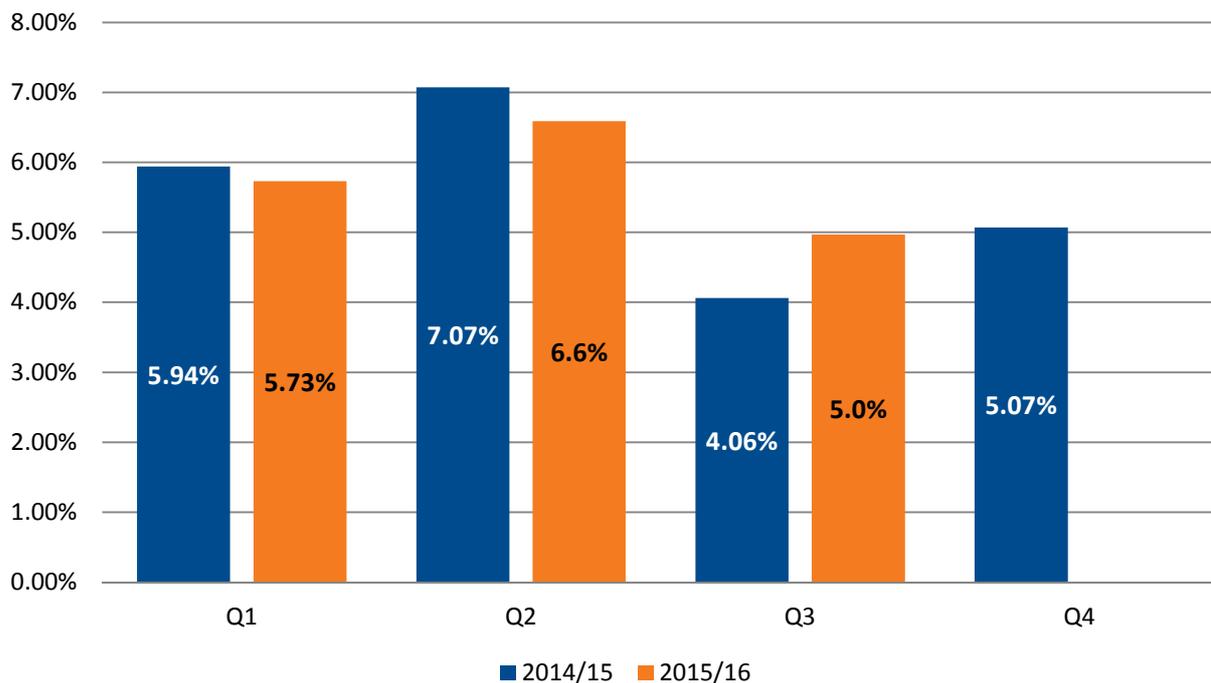


**Performance Comment:** The numbers of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) has dropped since the start of the financial year. In March there were 1,327 people claiming this benefit (1.3%). The figures for December 2015 show that 846 people are now claiming JSA (0.8%). This compares well to a national figure of 1.5% JSA claimants. The last time the level of JSA claimants was this low was in June 2008 with 983 (1.0%).

### Percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs)

Non-participation in education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression, involvement in crime and poor mental health. The figures are based on the monthly submission made to Department for Education via National Client Caseload Information System for Kent County Council. Academic age is the age of the young person on 31st August (i.e. prior to the start of the academic year).

Current Value	2015/16 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
6.59%					

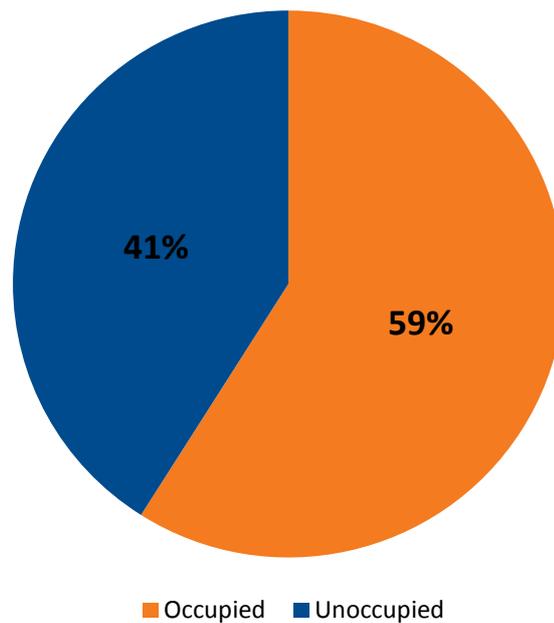


**Performance Comment:** When compared to the other Kent districts Maidstone has the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest NEETs figure and is 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest overall for percentage of unknowns. The total number of NEETs has increased by 32% compared to the same quarter of last year. In the previous year there were 765 unknowns, which represented 14% of all NEETs. In Quarter 3 2015/16, there were 507 unknowns (9.3%), which is a significant improvement. The tracking and supporting of NEETs and unknowns has improved throughout the Kent area. This represents a considerable opportunity to work collaboratively with organisations in the Borough.

### Number of business and enterprises using the Business Terrace

The Business Terrace is a new venture by the Council, to provide office space and facilities to smaller and start-up business with the addition of business support functions. Through local, regional and national partners and other users, The Business Terrace provides formal and informal peer-to-peer business support and advice underpinned by onsite bespoke mentoring, events, seminars and workshops.

Current Value	2015/16 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
59%	Set baseline	N/A			



**Performance Comment:** The Business Terrace opened in September and has received a lot of interest from local businesses with demand being higher than available space. The current chart shows the hub occupancy for Quarter 3. Currently, 59% of all space is occupied. Of the 10 offices, all are currently occupied. Of the 12 desks, 3 are currently fully occupied. This data will be used to establish a baseline and produce a target for future performance.

Delays in opening the Business Hub and launching the website initially hindered marketing and promotion of available space. To increase desk space takeup, advisors are promoting them to start-ups as part of their business development. Networking events have been held to introduce the desks to users, and show exactly what they offer. The Economic Development team are working with organisations to promote desk space to start-ups and home-workers, as these are the primary users of these desks.

## Planning for Sufficient Homes to meet our Borough's Needs

Over the last five years, the supply of new affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historic levels. 189 new affordable homes were built in the borough in 2013/14 and 163 in 2014/15. In total 413 new homes were delivered in 2014/15, of these new homes over 75% were built on land that had previously been developed.

### Local Plan Update

Consultation on the final partial version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP) was completed on 30 October 2015 and a full report of the representations was prepared, and the responses analysed. Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation (SPS&T) Committee approved the revised Local Development Scheme on 10 November 2015 that anticipates an Examination in Public of the MBLP in September 2016. A detailed report of representations to the final Regulation 18 consultation was presented to SPS&T Committee on 14th December 2015 and slight amendments were recommended and considered. The Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) was then taken to SPS&T Committee on 13th January 2016. This constitutes a 'sound plan' for Council adoption for final consultation and then Submission to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public. SPS&T Committee requested further minor changes, prior to forwarding to Full Council, and these were agreed at SPS&T Committee on 19th January 2016.

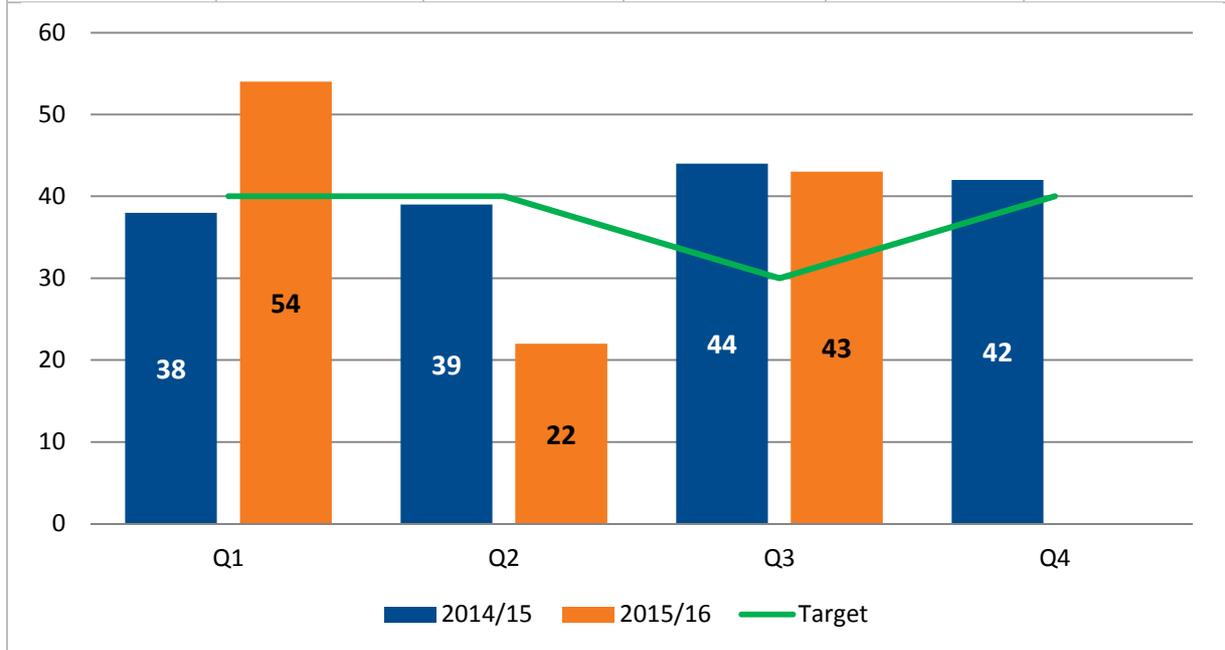
### Housing Strategy Update

The consultation period for the Housing Strategy themes concluded at the end of December 2015. Two events were held with key stakeholders that included senior representatives from the house building industry, housing associations, Kent County Council and from the voluntary sector. Colleagues from the Policy & Information Team supported the events and the Service has received very positive feedback from those attending the events. In addition, the Council's Communication Team has assisted with the broader consultation through mixed media sources including a web-based questionnaire that was open to all members of the public. The consultation has provided useful feedback and enabled the team to adapt or amend certain parts of the Strategy. The respondents were supportive of the approach adopted by the Council, endorsing the priority themes and the rationale behind them. The next stage is for the consultation outcome to be reported to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee in January 2016 and the draft Strategy to then be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee in February for recommendation for adoption by Council in March. This timetable remains on track.

### Number of affordable homes delivered

Housing supply has simply not kept pace with demand. Many families are locked out of the housing market by unaffordable prices and unobtainable mortgages. An affordable dwelling includes social-rented housing and intermediate housing. These can be new build or acquisitions; the figure does not taken into account any losses.

Current Performance	2015/16 Annual Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
43	150	+13	↓	🟢	Target will be met



**Performance Comment:** The quarterly target for this indicator is profiled to take into account seasonal variances. For the year to date 119 affordable homes have been delivered against a year to date target of 110. The annual target of 150 is expected to be achieved at the this stage. The increase in performance for quarter 3 is due to a development providing a large number of affordable homes, finished in the last week of december. The overall programme is expected to deliver at least 160 affordable homes, which will exceed the annual target.