

Overview Report

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Overview Meeting 2021

20 April 2021

Adults and Health

Context

The Council has a strong track record of sound financial management. In the current economic climate, finances are always going to be a challenge, and we work hard to make our budget go further. We have adapted to unprecedented funding reductions over the last eight years, saving around £53m. Our medium-term financial planning approach has allowed us to continually balance our budget through delivering savings and efficiencies but also to plan ahead and deliver invest-to-save schemes and innovative changes to service delivery models. We carefully target investments to stimulate economic growth, provide great assets and deliver financial returns to offset funding reductions.

Since the initial development of this Council Plan we have and still are experiencing the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. Coronavirus provides huge challenges for us to address in terms of community and economic recovery and dealing with the long-term implications of the pandemic. We have reviewed our priorities for the coming year and have adapted these to reflect the focus that is needed to respond to this challenge.

The challenge for all Members is to ensure that decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered are within the resources available, taking account of a number of factors such as the uncertain financial position, changing demographics, increasing demand, new national legislation and policy direction.

Members are reminded of the Council's Vision that supports decision-making:

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm, where
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
 - People are supported and protected from harm
 - People live health lives
- A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed, creating
 - A growing economy
 - Improved education and skills development
 - Job creation and increased employment
- A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive, creating
 - Great places to live and visit
 - Clean and green spaces
 - Rich cultural experiences

The Council plays its part in making sure this is achieved by being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

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Performance Reporting

Performance across the Council Plan was reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee. Please see the link:

<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SCR>

Adults and Health - Director - Ann Workman

Relevant services include:

- Adult Services
- Adult Operational Services
- Public Health
- Environmental Health Unit

Council Plan 2020-2023

The Council Plan sets out the aims and objectives for all services and is refreshed on an annual basis.

The key priorities for 2020-21 for the Adults and Health themes are attached at Appendix 1.

Emerging Issues

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows:

Priorities of the Health & Wellbeing Board

- All children and families get best start in life.
- All people in Stockton live well and live longer.
- All people in Stockton live in healthy places and sustainable communities

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ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Considered by the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee in February 2021.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Overview

The Public Health team has been at the coalface of the response to Covid throughout the pandemic. It has been the role of the team to understand the spread of Covid in the Borough and lead on the planning and implementation of actions to both prevent the spread and respond to cases and outbreaks of Covid. The team has been responsible for developing and leading on the implementation of the Covid Control Plan for the Borough. We have enjoyed ongoing strong working relationships with Public Health England, local NHS organisations and other local authorities across the region to deliver this. Central to the approach has been working through, and developing further, close working relationships and systems across many other parts of SBC and robust political and corporate leadership and support around outbreak management.

The past year has required Public Health to work at an unprecedented pace, digesting, analyzing, responding to and acting on national guidance, emerging evidence, national and local data, national learning and research and local issues. The team has worked in a highly flexible way, across a very wide range of work areas, with an ongoing heavy workload. To do this, the team has deployed and enhanced its specialist public health skills, as well as all team members working outside of their usual job roles, supported by a programme of training and strong line management and team support.

The Public Health team has led and managed the Covid response, whilst maintaining its core areas of non-Covid Public Health work over the course of the year.

Covid Management Work

In summary, Public Health has:

- provided leadership for the Council's Covid planning and response, including advising the political Leadership and being the key advice into Corporate Management Team and the Health and Wellbeing Board
- worked directly with a wide range of people across the Borough, including: our local communities, schools, care homes, workplaces and businesses, SBC services, community organisations and commissioned services
- regularly analysed local intelligence in detail, including softer intelligence from a range of settings, to produce recommendations for action and to shape and monitor local plans
- developed local procedures, interpreted national guidance and given Public Health advice
- developed prevention plans and guidance for key settings and carried out prevention support visits in a range of settings including those supporting some of our most vulnerable residents e.g. hotels, hostels, university, schools, care homes, early years settings, SBC services
- developed and lead a Covid Response Service with input from other SBC teams, offering a Single Point of Access service 7 days a week, 8am-8pm, working closely with Customer Services and PHE
- supported key settings to assess risk around Covid and work with them when they have a case of Covid or an outbreak

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- managed outbreaks through for 28 days, regularly checking up with the setting and providing ongoing advice and support
- followed up people who are contacts of Covid cases and couldn't be contacted by the national Test and Trace team, with a very good success rate
- provided advice and support to people to isolate including linking them to the community hub and pointing them to financial support and mental wellbeing support
- trained and supported other SBC colleagues who have joined the team to help manage cases and outbreaks of Covid
- worked closely with communications and engagement colleagues to develop messages and engagement approaches based on the emerging evidence and intelligence

The team has received some very positive feedback on its work including from members of the local community, schools, businesses and Health and Wellbeing Board partners. It continues to respond to evolving national policy, ensuring a local outbreak management system that is flexible and future proofed.

The pandemic has also highlighted and widened the health, social and economic inequality in society, nationally and locally, which will continue to impact into the foreseeable future. Public Health has also worked with regional colleagues on understanding these inequalities through an inequalities impact assessment to inform local recovery planning, as well as leading on shaping our local provision to prevent and mitigate the impact of these inequalities as far as possible. Areas such as Stockton-on-Tees are at greater risk of becoming areas of 'enduring transmission' of Covid, due to factors such as demography, deprivation, inequality and economic make-up. Public Health is working with regional and Tees Valley colleagues to mitigate against this and to address inequality through a range of actions using a 'proportionate universalism' approach - ensuring support to the Borough's general population, whilst targeting additional support to the most vulnerable in our communities. This includes:

- Informing and shaping targeted work and a 'two-way conversation' with the community through grassroots champions and network
- Leading the development of targeted and flexible testing within the community, working closely with community services colleagues to implement 3 large community testing centres. This is now transferring to 6 or 7 smaller community-based sites, to increase access to local communities. Public Health also lead on an intensive 2-week surge testing effort following the detection of a case of a Variant of Concern in the Borough, working closely with community services and PHE. The Public Health team has also led the development of a range of wider testing programmes including in workplaces and day centres and has supported the Borough's schools in establishing the schools testing programme.
- Developing and implementing a resilient and locally-lead contact tracing system
- Informing support to help people isolate
- Targeted work together with NHS colleagues to help them increase uptake of the vaccination - particularly in vulnerable groups

Beyond outbreak management activities, Public Health has implemented a range of Covid-related provision during the pandemic. During the first wave, the Public Health team lead and formed the bulk of the shield team within the community hub. The shield team called 10,000 clinically vulnerable people to provide any support they needed such as emotional wellbeing and mental health, social care, food, access to medication and links into other services as needed such as substance misuse services. Public Health also worked with Early Help and School Catering to set up a network of emergency free school meal provision at short notice for families who would not be able to access their normal FSM provision in March / April 2020. This scheme provided 1300 meals every day to local families through the Family Hubs and voluntary groups, in addition to 500 meals to schools that were providing direct from their sites.

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Non-Covid Public Health Work

Public Health has also continued to ensure a range of key provision continues and adapts to the effects of Covid, including:

- 0-19 services – worked closely our commissioned provider who continued to provide all key contacts through health visiting service, using both face-to-face and remote delivery; focused priority work on maintaining contact with and supporting the most vulnerable families in the Borough, particularly those with safeguarding concerns
- Substance misuse services – worked closely our commissioned provider to ensure delivery of many contacts through remote means, which was positively received by many clients, as well as continued face-to-face support for the most vulnerable clients to maintain contact with them
- Assurance, monitoring and oversight of our domestic abuse provision
- Bereavement services – provided additional funding to build up bereavement services, supporting those who have lost loved-ones during the pandemic, including particular support to care home staff
- Ensuring the mental health impact of Covid is understood and support is built on, through a regional mental health impact assessment
- Provided key messages to the community around stopping smoking particularly given the links between poor lung health and poorer outcomes of Covid infection; and support around alcohol consumption as this has increased during the pandemic
- Sexual health services – ensured the service-maintained core delivery through both an online and face-to-face offer
- Better Health at Work Award - centred around supporting businesses through Covid and how they support their workforce. Moved to online assessments and virtual training sessions
- Providing key input into SBC's strategic approach to inequalities

Future

The Public Health team continues to respond to evolving national policy on outbreak management, as the 'response' in this regard is not yet over. 'Business as usual' has not resumed yet for the team but we are moving increasingly towards managing the Covid-specific work alongside our programme of core Public Health activities and are continually reviewing our priorities and our team capacity to enable this. Alongside the rest of Adults and Health, we also continue to synthesise all the learning from the past year and work to ensure this is not lost and good practice and innovation are embedded.

We are developing our Public Health strategic approach going forward, in particular working with colleagues across the Public Health system to address inequalities in the Borough, to help recovery and mitigate against future pandemics / other incidents that affect the population. We will work closely with SBC colleagues as part of the work to embed this as part of the new Council Plan approach.

Public Health is working closely as part of the health and care system to support recovery and next phase planning across the system – not just standing up services, but embedding new ways of working, looking at models of delivery and working with the community to co-produce solutions (embedding community asset-based working as intended pre-Covid).

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental Health Service Roles & Responsibility:

- To protect the health and wellbeing of the public.
- To ensure that members, other Council departments, customers, businesses and the public are fully aware of the Environmental Health function and further that they see Environmental Health as a valued and key Council asset.
- To address differently our stakeholders by offering various options to address local business needs.
- To understand local business needs and tailor the Environmental Health service accordingly.
- To maximise income generation through business or training services were this also allows for better local statutory compliance.
- To ensure that local residents can initially self-serve to acquire information quickly and accurately.
- To acknowledge our role as regulator whilst working to raise awareness in the Community to reduce the need for enforcement.

Environmental Health Structure:

Please see additional Word document.

Environmental Health Budget:

The Council's Environmental Health Service holds a stable budget allocation of circa £1.45 million. The Environmental Health service also generates circa £150,000 per annum through pest control, industrial regulation and training for local businesses.

In the last year the service has seen an income loss of circa £50,000 due to the loss of non public nuisance pest control treatment and the loss of direct face to face training provision for our local businesses – both of these are as a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic and this will unfortunately also impact on the 2021/22 income generated.

Environmental Health Key Functions:

The Environmental Health Service provides a wide range of key functions and services to the local area. These functions both statutory and non statutory include:

- Food Safety (with responsibility for inspection of about 1400 food premises, investigation of food complaints and food sampling)
- Food Advice and Training Service
- Occupational Health & Safety (with responsibility for inspection of about 4000 mainly commercial and retail businesses, and for investigation of accidents and complaints)
- Infectious Disease Control
- Smoke free legislation enforcement
- Public Health promotion Smoking, workplace health, nutrition etc.
- Environmental Protection (inspection of industrial processes, air pollution monitoring and complaint investigation)
- Noise Pollution (investigation of complaints and monitoring)

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- Contaminated Land (maintaining a risk-based register of all known potentially contaminated land sites, of which there are approximately 1,300 and implementing a programme to assess need for remediation)
- Environmental Advice (for example, on the environmental implications of planning or licensing applications)
- Public nuisance investigation (e.g. filthy and verminous premises, accumulation of waste, contaminated watercourses, light intrusion, empty buildings)

Environmental Health – Challenges and opportunities / Priorities for the year ahead:

The key challenge during the pandemic has been to ensure the continuation of as many of these services as possible and will continue to be as such while we transition out of the pandemic throughout 2021/22.

Changed services – how services have responded, changed their models of delivery to accommodate safe working.

- 85% of services at P1 or P2 between March 2020 and July 2020 (85% operational)
- 95% of service at P1, P2 and other from July 2020 (95% operational)

The model of delivery has changed by implementing enhanced safe systems of work, remote working, “bubble” working, shift pattern implementation, prebooked appointments were applicable, etc.

As well as ensuring the core functions of the service are met there have been additional and new responsibilities during the pandemic which will continue throughout 2021/22:

Continuation of all P1 Services including Pest Control, Animal Welfare, Commercial H&S, Commercial Food Safety, Environmental Protection, Technical Admin, as well as enhanced new services for:

- Covid Business Compliance Guidance/Advice/Complaint handling
- Care Home Protection Operational Group Workstream
- Public Health T&T
- Compliance & Enforcement Workstream

Compliance & Enforcement Workstream – The C&E Workstreams origins began in March 2020 in response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) viral pandemic and as part of the response in combatting the disease by Stockton - on -Tees Borough Council. The workstream originally comprised Environmental Health, Public Health, and Licensing addressing and advising business in terms of their responsibilities in providing safe work environments, determining if they were able to remain open as essential businesses in the first lockdown and providing advice on safety measures for what would become known as the “hands, face & space” advice to the public. The regulatory services as well as advising on business requirements and concerns from the public also acted as the regulators for the new powers conferred to Local Authorities.

Care Home Protection Operational Group – The purpose of the care home protection group is to ensure that care homes are supported as much as possible to prevent and control Covid-19 by access to expert advice and information regarding infection prevention and control. The group acts as a conduit for agreement regarding the distribution of information to care homes to ensure a consistent understanding and approach to communications. All information

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provided to care homes in any format is consistent with national guidance regarding Covid-19. Chaired by the Environmental Health Service Manager, SBC, core members represent the following organisations:

- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- We are People First (Advocacy)
- Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Changing Roles – A further challenge has been the necessity for roles to change and adapt to assist with the overall work in addressing the Covid 19 Pandemic. Examples within Environmental Health being:

Examples of changed roles

- Environmental Health Service Manager – Assisted management of C&E Workstream between March and December 2020, currently member of the revised C&E Workstream. Chair and manager of the Care Home Protection Operational Group
- EH Training Consultant – Assisting with and maintaining a key role in supporting Public Health and key member of the Care Home Protection Operational Group
- 2 X Environmental Health Officers – Assisting with both Shielding work in initial phase of the pandemic as well as being seconded to Public Health

Recovery – The challenge and opportunity going forward will be to assess the service and understand lessons learned during the difficult 2020/22 period and how new ways of working can be adopted more permanently while ensuring a high service delivery and ensuring staff remain protected and safe while undertaking their duties.

In addition to this the easing of the pandemic will in due course allow for the income generation to recover and flourish.

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Appendix 1 – Council Plan - Key Priorities 2020- 2021 - Adults and Health

Making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm means creating a place where:

- People live in cohesive and safe communities
- People are supported and protected from harm
- People live healthy lives

We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- Improve the consistency and continuity of social work practice
- Review the quality and suitability of our 'out of area' adults' placements to try, where possible, to support people to return to live in the Borough
- Continuously improve quality of care within adults' residential homes, and in response to the specific issues arising from Coronavirus
- Progress integration opportunities with the NHS
- Develop and test a community pathfinder approach, to support people who are lonely and living in social isolation
- Develop coordinated approach to identifying adults at risk of poor health and design coordinated offer of early intervention and support
- Develop a whole-Council approach to improving health and wellbeing to address inequalities, and the impact of Coronavirus