

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

19 JANUARY 2019

**REPORT OF
SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Lead Cabinet Member - Leader of the Council - Councillor Bob Cook

TARGETED ACTION AREAS UPDATE

1. Summary

As members may recall, approval was granted in November 2017 to implement an area based, targeted intervention approach which would provide a visible, neighbourhood management presence to some of the boroughs more vulnerable local communities in the central Stockton and the Victoria area in Thornaby. Both are areas which experience high concentrations of low value private rented housing, high numbers of empty properties and are hotspots for crime and anti-social behaviour.

This report updates Cabinet on progress made to date in the implementation of targeted action area approach providing examples of positive interventions and outcomes achieved and details how partners including the police, Fire Brigade, Registered Housing Providers and council service teams have come together to work proactively with local communities to improve on the ground service delivery and address key local concerns.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to note:

1. The successful actions and initiatives which have been piloted to date which will inform the ongoing development of the Targeted Action Area project.
2. The ongoing collaborative meetings with the PLuSS (Private Landlords Supporting Stockton) private sector landlord group (as detailed in para 16 of this report).
3. In response to the above, the decision to progress with Selective Licensing of private rented housing in Central Stockton and North Thornaby has at this time been postponed, this will allow for a period of positive engagement with private sector landlords (via the PLuSS partnership) to explore potential alternative options.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision

The implementation of a targeted area based intervention approach is aimed at directly addressing the issues associated with poor property management by some private sector landlords. Pivotal to the proposal is the need support local communities, by focusing on stability

and encouraging a more responsive community input. In essence the project provides a period of intensive support for some of the more vulnerable areas of the borough.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code).

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to note:

1. The successful actions and initiatives which have been piloted to date which will inform the ongoing development of the Targeted Action Area project.
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DETAIL

Background

1. In November 2017 members supported the proposal to introduce an area based, targeted intervention approach (decision record no D170098) to support the central Stockton area and the Victoria area in the Mandale & Victoria ward. There are areas of our borough with high concentrations of low value and low demand terraced housing. Unfortunately as rental values are lower in these areas, a high number of properties are occupied by either vulnerable households, those with limited housing choices or transient residents with chaotic lifestyles. As a result these local communities are often hotspots for crime, anti-social behaviour and experience high numbers of empty properties and high property turnovers.

2. As detailed in the 2017 Cabinet report the aim of the Targeted Action Area (TAA) initiative is to:
 - Bring council and partner agencies together (such as the Police, Fire Service and Registered Housing Providers) to deliver localised and bespoke interventions which are specifically targeted at addressing local priority issues and concerns.
 - Work with partners across the Voluntary and Community Sector to explore opportunities to support wider community engagement and empowerment.
 - Demonstrate to these local communities that collaboratively we can make a difference to these local areas and bring about sustained improvements.
 - At a time of limited financial resources (across all sectors) maximise the value and impact of service delivery i.e. secure partner support for shared priorities and objectives to maximise effective service delivery.
 - Adapted and adjust initiatives quickly should local priorities change.
 - Work collaboratively with local communities to ensure that 'solutions' are owned.

Understanding these localities

3. As members will recall, one of the 'tools' being considered as part of the TAA initiative was the potential introduction of Selective Licensing of private rented housing stock. As part of this option appraisal a significant level of mapping has been undertaken to fully understand the issues being experienced by these two communities. By way of an example, tenure mapping data has allowed us the opportunity to identify the key Registered Provider's operating in each locality, whilst engaging with colleagues across Community Services and the Police has highlighted hotspots for environmental blight, crime and anti-social behaviour.
4. In addition the detailed consultation undertaken with residents, private sector landlords and wider stakeholders as part of the Selective Licensing consultation resulted in 1,190 questionnaires being returned. Whilst a detailed analysis of all questionnaire responses is being undertaken, the information contained in the 'free text boxes' has provided valuable intelligence to what are the key concerns of these local communities and this feedback has been influential in the early TAA interventions. As importantly this local intelligence has been shared with colleagues (internal and external to the Council) so this information can be considered in detail as each partner explores how they can contribute to development of the TAA project.

Maps indicating the localities of the two Targeted Action Areas are attached at **Appendix A**.

Progress and ongoing actions

Effective partnership working and project governance

5. To ensure that this is truly a collaborative project a series of meetings have taken place with partners across a range of sectors including the Police, Fire Brigade and local RP's (Thirteen and North Star who have the highest concentrations of housing stock in the two areas). All have confirmed they are supportive of the project and have been active participants to date, for example:
 - All are active members, at a senior level, of the established working groups which bring internal and external partners together.
 - All have participated in the regular 'Operation Clean-Up' events (see para 8-11 for further detail).

- North Start have provided the venue for the Weekly Community 'Pop-Up' in Thornaby (see para 12 and 13 for further detail).
 - All have attended the Weekly Community 'Pop-up' events (see para 12 and 13 for further detail).
6. To ensure effective governance of the TAA project an internal Steering Group has been established. In acknowledgement that the project crosses a range of service directorates, the Steering Group is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and membership includes Directors from a number of service areas.
 7. In addition to the above internal Steering Group, regular stakeholder meetings have been held and will be undertaken quarterly with senior officers from both the Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade. As noted previously both are supportive of the project and have committed to being active delivery partners. Meetings at this level ensure that the project sits within the strategic priorities and objectives of each partner and that the project will secure the support of 'on the ground' delivery teams.

Monthly 'Operation Clean – Ups'

8. Regular sessions have been established alternating between the Central Stockton and the North Thornaby areas. These interventions have been determined as a priority, following an analysis of feedback received from the Selective Licensing consultation which highlighted that in both central Stockton and North Thornaby environmental blight (fly tipping, rubbish, graffiti, overgrown alleyways etc.) was a major community concern.
9. The 'Clean Up's' see a range of statutory and voluntary partners (as detailed in the table below) come together to directly tackle issues of environmental blight as well as achieving a broader range of additional positive outcomes. This has been achieved by:
 - Re-aligning services to all work together on a pre-arranged day to maximise service delivery and impact.
 - Pooling resources (people and equipment) to maximise service impact.

In addition to the visual impact the delivery of these interventions has also:

- Provided a strong visible 'service' and presence in each local area.
- Engagement with local residents, community members and support of local schools.
- Directly responded to communities concerns.
- Provided opportunities for ongoing community engagement.

A photo montage of both days is attached as **Appendix B** which demonstrates the visual impact of these initiatives whilst the table below provides an example of the positive outcomes of 'Clean-Ups' and the broad range of partner involved:

Central Stockton Clean Up 20 September 2018 – Outcomes	Partners Involvement
<p><i>Environmental improvements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 streets and back alleyways targeted • 6.7 tonnes of waste removed (4.5 tonnes SBC, 2.2 tonnes Thirteen) • Overgrown vegetation removed • 1 empty property secured • <p><i>Community information exchange/support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 440 letters hand delivered to residents giving contact details and energy switch information <p><i>Enforcement Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several arrests made • Vehicles uplifted due to road tax offences • Verbal warnings issued to car owners • Vehicle tax warnings issued • Police intelligence obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from two local primary schools • Clients and staff from Change Grow Live (CGL) • Clients and staff from New Walk CIC • Local residents/community members • Thirteen Group colleagues • Enforcement staff • SBC CFYA teams • Police community support staff • SBC housing staff • Local ward Councillors <p><i>Excellent cooperation by all agencies and local community members</i></p>

North Thornaby Clean Up 23 October 2018 – Outcomes	Partner Involvement
<p><i>Environmental improvements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 streets and back alleyways targeted • 4.1 tonnes of waste removed (SBC and Thirteen) • 14 empty homes inspected • Graffiti removed <p><i>Community information exchange/support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 356 letters hand delivered giving contact details and energy switch information • 18 Fire Inspection visits made • 630 properties receiving fire safety advice (some outside of the target area) • 83 Thirteen properties visited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from two local primary schools • Local residents/community members • Thirteen Group colleagues • Northstar Housing Group colleagues • Enforcement staff • SBC CFYA teams • Police community support staff • SBC housing staff • Local ward Councillors • Fire Brigade <p><i>Excellent cooperation by all agencies local community members</i></p>

10. The example events detailed above were supported by both New Walk CIC and the Five Lamps who provided a welfare base and refreshments for staff and volunteers. Further 'Operation Clean- Up's' are planned throughout December 2018 and January - March 2019.

11. The two Clean Ups detailed have also provided an opportunity for partners to 'test and learn' to ensure that we can secure improvements to future service delivery. For example practical improvements which will be rolled out include the use of hand held radios to support improved/effective communication on the day and reducing the numbers of streets on each session to maximise impact.

'Pop Up' community sessions

12. As noted previously within the report, central Stockton and North Thornaby do experience transient populations as a result of the high level of private sector rented housing. Through early engagement sessions it was recognised that we need to practically re-engage with local communities and this is currently being piloted through weekly 'pop-up' schemes operating in both Central Stockton and North Thornaby which provide the opportunity for the local community to 'pop in' and access a range of services. Colleagues from across the Council including Community Services, Welfare Support and Housing attend plus local Police representatives and Thirteen and North Star colleagues are all available to deal with community / resident queries.

The two sessions are held:

- Central Stockton: New Walk CIC on Hartington Road have provided accommodation for the Central Stockton sessions and these have started on a Wednesday afternoon.
- North Thornaby: North Star have provided their 'Community Hub' on Havelock Street for the North Thornaby sessions and these have been operating on a Wednesday morning.

The benefits of these 'pop-up' sessions are two-fold:

- They bring partners together to share intelligence, and
- Provide a community contact point.

13. Both schemes has been advertised by leaflet drops and social media and we are monitoring numbers attending to review their effectiveness and specifically if this is a way to engage with some of our 'harder to reach' residents.

Partner Environmental Investment

14. As already noted there are a number of Registered Housing Providers who have a significant interest within central Stockton and North Thornaby areas. Both have committed to aligning their activity to supporting the objectives of the TAA initiative. By way of an example Thirteen have recently committed to a range of environmental improvement works, lighting and CCTV instalments within their housing stock on the 'Parkfield Estate' which will support the broader TAA project.

Hartington Road (Task and Finish Group)

15. A specific Task and Finish group has been established to explore the issues associated with the Hartington Road area of central Stockton. All partners recognise that this is an area with high levels of 'hostel' and 'shared-house' accommodation and is an area with specific issues and problems that are likely to require a different and more intensive approach than the broader TAAs. Solutions currently being explored include options for improvements to the physical environment, a review of how services are commissioned/the potential unintended consequences of concentrated services, engagement with all local landlords in the area and broader engagement with a diverse community and specific client groups.

Ongoing engagement with P LuSS (private sector landlords)

16. As previously highlighted in the report the Council has consulted with the local communities, private sector landlords and stakeholders in Central Stockton and North Thornaby on a proposal to introduce Selective Licensing of private sector housing stock. An 'alternative delivery approach' to Selective Licensing has been proposed by a recently formed group of landlords called P LuSS (Private Landlords Supporting Stockton), this group has 100+ members, who collectively own/manage a significant proportion of private rented housing within the two proposed selective licensing areas. P LuSS have approached the Council suggesting an

alternative public/private partnership model to achieve the same positive and desired outcomes as Selective Licensing.

17. Positive engagement with PLuSS representatives has commenced and collectively they are working with representatives from the Housing Service to explore alternative models to Selective Licensing. To give sufficient time for these alternatives to be explored and for meaningful engagement to take place the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing in North Thornaby and Central Stockton has at this time been postponed.

Areas for future development

18. The TAA initiative is an evolving project and we are in the early stages of the projects development/implementation.
19. A number of the early actions (detailed above) have been implemented to demonstrate the commitment of the Council and its partners to address local community concerns. Moving forward detailed action plans are being developed, each action will be intelligence lead and will identify how each partner can deliver sustained improvements (working both individually and collaboratively) to both localities.
20. The need to embed community engagement is also a key next step. It is proposed to develop two area based community partnerships which will include members/representatives from the local community, VCSE representatives and broader stakeholders including local ward members.
21. Whilst only at an early stage, all partners have also recognise that building community resilience and 'legacy' planning will be a key success measure of the TAA project.
22. Finally, to measure the impact and success of the TAA initiative, consideration is currently being given to the development of a performance framework. In order to seek ongoing support from partners it is vital that we are able to demonstrate the value (and potential cost savings) of delivering services at a bespoke local level.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

23. As noted within the body of this report the TAA covers two distinct areas of the borough, Central Stockton and North Thornaby. The aim of a project of this nature is to have a positive impact on all community members within these localities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no direct financial implications to this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

26. A detailed risk assessment has been undertaken to inform the TAA proposal. At this stage the project is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES

27. Targeted Action directly supports the following policy principles in the Council Plan:

- Protecting the vulnerable and promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention: This proposal will directly support those vulnerable members of our community who live in poor quality private rented accommodation within the older housing areas of Central Stockton and in the Victoria area of the Mandale and Victoria ward.
- Tackle inequality: through improving access to health facilities, affordable housing and financial inclusion.
- Developing strong and healthy communities and creating economic prosperity across the borough: The project is directly aimed at supporting identified communities and address key local issues.
- Help people to be healthier by: aligning commissioned service to maximise opportunities for clients to access a wide variety of services and support.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

28. None.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

29. The proposal will directly impact on the Parkfield and Oxbridge, Stockton Town Centre and Mandale and Victoria wards.

30. Regular and ongoing consultation briefings take place with the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members.

Richard McGuckin

Director of Economic Growth and Development Services

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Education related?

No.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 16.11.17 'Targeted Action Areas (Older Housing Stock')

Report to Cabinet 12.07.18 'Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation'

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Stockton Town Centre: Councillors D Hewitt and P Kirton

Parkfield and Oxbridge: Councillors Javed and L Baldock

Victoria and Mandale: Councillors S Bailey, T Stott and P Rowling

Property

As detailed within the body of the report.